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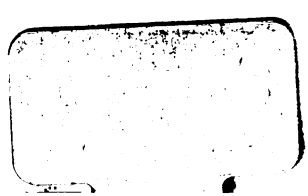

THE WHIP

BY

RICHARD PARKER

NOVELIZED FROM CECIL RALEIGH'S
GREAT DRURY LANE MELODRAMA

ILLUSTRATED WITH PICTURES FROM THE PLAY

NEW YORK
THE MACAULAY COMPANY

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THE WHIP

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CHAPTER I

AN UNUSUAL INTRODUCTION

LADY DIANA set her mount at the stiffly railed fence before her, and as the pack, scenting the food waiting in the kennels, swept through the barrier, Lady Diana went over it.

In mid air she saw a picture, vividly and anxiously. Under the royal oak sat an artist sketching. So intent was he on his outline of the kennels and mushroomed stables that he gave no attention to the hounds and apparently was not conscious of the approach hurtling through the air—of the lady on her palfrey.

The original impetus of Lady Diana's

leap would have carried woman and horse squarely into the person of the artist. But the moment the girl had seen him a paralyzing inhibition had stayed the force of horse and rider almost in the air, and both lost their carrying power, making a very bungling finale of what had been originally a very fine movement.

But as it was, the easel, made on the spot by the artist out of twigs and dead branches, had been shattered by a movement of one of the hunter's sleek legs, and, worse—an iron-shod hoof had made an ugly mark upon the artist's left wrist, which had laid at rest on the moss while his right hand sketched.

In a trembling hurry Lady Diana swung from the saddle. Her mount, disregarded, was allowed to amble away, and browsed without restraint.

"Oh, I'm so sorry—pray tell me that you're not hurt—severely," she said, and raised her eyes to the stranger's face.

She saw clean cut features, black eyes with just a shade of amusement—of whim in them—though there must have been pain in that wrist—and wavy black hair. The man was in rough tweeds, and a cloth hat of his suit's pattern lay a little way off.

But from beneath and beyond the stranger's features, Lady Diana Sartoris got her impression of the man. There were sadness, wistfulness, a sense of the decay of a fine nature, a look of tragedy.

His hurt did not appear to concern him. Indeed, his whole being seemed devoted to a scrutinizing, an appraising of her. From her green little hat and her long green coat, he turned to note that cold perfection of her features, that fair chiseling which, with her perfect health, and consequent confident poise, made this young woman at times seem almost too self-centered, too well schooled.

Without answering the man stood watching her, almost hungrily, yet with no repul-

sive effect and very respectfully. The girl repeated her inquiry.

"Not a bit," he returned carelessly. "It was really very stupid of me not to have noticed a pack in full cry for its kennel feeding, and so inspiring an object as their mistress."

He had covered his hurt with his handkerchief and knotted and twisted it before the girl could offer to minister to him.

"Such absorption can only be excused in a very great artist, and such I assure you I can scarcely hope to be."

His deprecating motion brought his open sketch book nearer the girl and her eyes fell upon its pages.

"Why, there's the kennels!" she exclaimed. "Oh! I mustn't think of your sketches, but your hurt. I am profoundly sorry. If I could do anything—"

"A little thing that I can attend to easily after a bit," he said—then in courteous anx-

iety to turn the current of her thoughts he went on: "It really gives an idea of them, doesn't it? See, here are some of the dogs."

The book was now in the girl's hand.

"I've noticed you about sketching for the past four mornings," she confessed, turning the pages. "And, ah, see, here's Dido!"

With a laugh the artist answered,

"I'm glad it's good enough to recognize."

"Oh, yes—but," she began and hesitated.

"Ah, there's a but," laughed the stranger, merrily.

"I draw a little myself, you know," went on the girl, "and dogs and horses are rather my strong point."

There was no pride in her manner, only the sublime self-confidence of a Sartoris of Yorkshire.

"And you don't think they're mine," the stranger said, amusement in his eye, but his voice perfectly serious.

"I don't say that," resumed the self-confident girl, "but you see—it isn't quite right. Look, just here—the turn of the head."

Again there was a jovial light in the stranger's smile.

"Would you put it right for me?" he asked.

Lady Diana caught the bridle of her horse and strode toward the stables.

"Come along, then," she said impersonally, "and we'll see what we can do."

In the level bit of ground before the stables she was greeted kindly and affectionately by hurrying stablemen, her arrival having been announced in a way by the pack, which without requiring the guidance of the whips, had rushed to the feeding troughs.

"Take my horse, one of you, will you? And someone bring out Dido," she ordered in a tone that seemed very gracious to the

English about her, but would have jarred upon even an American waiter.

A kennelman carried out the hound in his arms and deposited her near Lady Diana. With the sketch book on her knee, the girl pointed her riding-crop at Dido.

"Can you manage to hold her?" she asked.

The stranger, taking the hound, seated himself on the corner of the stone bridge that spanned a little stream and was a link in the highway that ran by the stables.

"How's that?" he asked.

"Just a little more round," she returned. "So! That's capital!" Then she busied herself with her pencil.

"Do you exhibit?" she asked, turning upon him for a second an oblique look, then another upon the drawing.

"Very little," he said, with marked hesitation.

"Whose—whose name am I to look for?" she inquired, a trace of personal kindliness in her glance.

"I'd rather not give my name—until I've done more for my reputation," he said a trifle awkwardly and in some concern.

The personal touch faded from her manner and she became again the self-centered, impregnable personality characteristic of the Englishwoman or man at will.

"Oh, as you like," she said. Then, holding out the sketch toward him, she went on: "There, look, how's that?"

"By Jove, it's splendid. What magic you can work with just a touch or two," he exclaimed.

She made him a little bow, with something not hostile in it, and began quickly to turn the pages of the book.

"Oh, you paint landscapes, too," she said; "and they're very good, too. That's a deli-

cious little bit, and that's the spinny where we killed last Fall and I got the brush. And, oh! the old half fortress—half tower sort of place. It looks as though it might be—"

She was looking toward the seat of the last Earl of Brancaster in the distance, dimly visible up the glen.

"The Rievers," the stranger finished her sentence. "It is. Haven't you ever been there?"

"Nobody about here goes," returned Lady Diana. "You see, it belongs to Lord Brancaster, and he hardly ever visits it, though I've heard he's here now. Did he give you permission to sketch it?"

The stranger nodded.

"I shouldn't have thought he would have had much sympathy with artists or art," she said.

"Why not?" he asked, his glance for the moment falling.

"His tastes are rather—er—notorious. I'm afraid he's rather a byword—about here. Even the country people call him 'The Wicked Earl.'"

The thoughtless words of this young Englishwoman, who was as yet too immature to exercise a fine judging sense, aroused the artist and he went closer to the girl.

"And because a lot of yokels give a man an odious nickname," he said tersely, "you judge him unheard. What do you know of him?"

"Nothing, thanks," said Lady Diana.

"Isn't it a bit rough on him to believe—on mere hearsay?" asked the artist.

"I don't, but my grandfather, who has a kind word for everyone, says that his grandfather was a soldier, his father a soldier and a gentleman, but he hopes the son will never darken his doors. And all the world says he fritters away his life and is flinging away his fortune."

The stranger smiled with a sense of pain reflected in his face.

"What the world says is often malice," he said, going to the rescue of Lord Brancaster, "but I'm sorry to hear what Lord Beverley said. Nobody's all bad. Perhaps it's because Lord Beverley doesn't know him that he thinks so ill of him. Perhaps if you knew him, you might find—some little good—"

"I'm sure I hope so," said Lady Diana. But the stranger continued:

"I'm sure he'd hope so. If he has played havoc with his life, mayn't he repent his folly? Perhaps in a sense he never had a chance—perhaps he never had a father or mother in his youth to direct him—and perhaps he'll turn out all right now—perhaps no good woman—"

A softly insidious voice thrust itself into the intimacy that seemed about to begin between these two young people.

"Ah, there you are," it said.

Both the girl and the man looked up and saw in the road a motor car with a chauffeur and a woman stepping out from it. For the briefest space the two women measured glances. Lady Diana saw a tall, rather dark and foreign appearing young woman of an uncertain age, whose black hair and sharp features gave her, in the estimation of anyone seeing her for the first time, a certain aspect of power.

A moment later she was walking toward them.

The artist was not pleased at this intrusion, and Diana saw that upon his face was that tragic mask she had noted when they saw each other for the first time, not so many minutes ago.

"So this is where you come to sketch so often," went on the woman from the motor car. "Delightful place! Pray introduce me."

The artist interposed himself between the two women, almost as though he feared harm to the younger of the two.

"I'm only a stranger here," he said, while Lady Diana, quite at her ease ignored a situation that to one of another nationality might have been a trifle embarrassing.

The intruder again swept Lady Diana with her eyes.

"Indeed," she said, a subtle menace in her tones. "Well, it's lucky I found you. If we are going for our usual spin together, François wants to tell you something about the car—the brake doesn't act properly."

Lady Diana was not pleased with her scrutiny of the other woman. She was too young to have esteemed the other fast, but there was a certain something about the tall and dark intruder that repelled this young Englishwoman. So she continued, though the other talked at her, to seclude herself in her British reserve.

To the artist, the situation appeared greatly to need relief. So to create a diversion, he walked toward the road where the car and chauffeur were waiting.

"We'll take it down to the village and look for a blacksmith," he volunteered.

But the woman who had come for him in the motor did not move. She was still in hope that Lady Diana would recognize her existence.

"Can't it be done here?" she asked, still eyeing the young English noblewoman and anxious for some offer of aid that would enable her to make Lady Diana's acquaintance.

"Certainly not," returned the artist almost roughly, "and, besides, here are the horses. The car may frighten them if we leave it in this neighborhood."

The woman of the motor car looked down the road and saw the Beverley string being

led and ridden from the exercising on the Downs.

"Dear things," she said for Lady Diana's benefit. "How splendidly they look. Race horses, too. I should have loved to see them. I'd no notion that there were any so near to us. To whom do they belong?"

"Lord Beverley," said the artist very shortly indeed. "Come along."

"Lord Beverley! Really," exclaimed the woman, and then, made bolder by this revelation, she spoke directly to Lady Diana: "I am so sorry we were in the way —pray tell Lord Beverley I'll take great care it doesn't happen again."

But this gracious speech won from the girl only a nod of the head and the singularly British irritating "Thank you," with a rising inflection at the end.

"Please make haste; they are here," the artist cautioned her.

"Yes, yes, dear," the dark woman returned and then smiled at Lady Diana, "Good morning."

Another little nod of the blond head and a "Thank you" were her only rewards. The artist bowed very impersonally and, with the woman who had come for him, rode down the road.

Musingly Lady Diana looked after them.

"I wonder who he is," she said, "and what hold she has on him."

CHAPTER II

DIANA THE HUNTRESS

To Lady Diana Sartoris, "the cleanest sportswoman in all England"—the orators of the hunt breakfasts of the Beverley Hounds would have it so—a fence was merely an obstacle. And so after this morning with the Beverley pack, Lady "Di" on her return to the kennels of her grandfather, the Marquis of Beverley, found a defiant pleasure in putting her hunter over every such obstacle. It was to this delight of hers, therefore, that a little later in the day the unknown artist owed his damaged wrist.

Though it was one of those perfect Yorkshire mornings, when rural England seems made for the sportsman, Lady Diana's gallop at the heels of the pack had not been altogether of pleasure.

To begin with, her grandfather, the pompous and morally bombastic Marquis of Beverley, had been in no good humor. Although Falconhurst, the most secluded and retired of the several country seats of the family, was filled with the members of a house party specially invited for Lady Diana Sartoris' benefit, Beverley had carefully warned the guests away from the Downs, and indeed had sent all of them otter hunting with Captain Greville Sartoris, Lady Diana's cousin.

"And otter hunting of all sports in the world!" Lady Diana had breathed sarcastically to her maid. "One might quite as well hunt a mouse as an otter, you know."

The reason Lady Diana knew, of course. The Whip, the newest racer in the great stables of Beverley, was being exercised on the Downs that morning and although this expected successor to the Newmarket win-

ners, Silver Cloud, Falconhurst, and Beverley's Hope, had not had her trial and was not likely to have for some time, the racing Marquis was determined that no strange eyes should learn anything of the speed pet of his declining years.

Stable secrets had been leaking of late in regard to some of the others in the string, but none should escape respecting the Whip.

This prohibition had extended to Lady Diana herself. It was not that through her there was danger of the betting ring getting advance information, but the young girl who shared almost equally in Beverley's affection for the Whip could not have been with the promising filly and her stable mates without being upon the back of the speediest.

For the girl rode the Whip or any of the other racers in the Beverley stables, as Diana of old hunted, with divine inspiration.

"But the little filly's growing up—or rather my granddaughter Lady Diana, is growing up," the Marquis had said more than once, "and a filly isn't a colt, any more —rather a young woman of position and rank isn't a girl, and she really can't ride with the lads of my stable."

So Lady Diana, in the warm rebellion of youth, at the first trammeling appearance of that convention which ultimately molds us all until we lose our little distinguishing essence and become as so many peas, was irritated by this abrupt separation from the things of her childhood.

Hence this finely strung, perhaps ordinarily too emotionless, young Englishwoman took the highest and roughest of the obstacles in her course as she followed in the wake of the Beverley hounds. For the hounds were not the features of a hunt, but merely out on one of their exercising expeditions, when to "keep their scent in" they

were permitted to range for trails under the guidance of whips.

One of the obstacles which Lady Diana took that morning was a stone fence that separated the lands of Falconhurst from the property of the Earl of Brancaster, in the midst of which stood the old stone tower, Rievers. As her hunter cleared the fencing cleanly and for a moment trespassed upon the lands of one regarded by the simple folk of Yorkshire as "the wicked earl," the girl looked toward the rocky heights accentuated by the feudal tower, continuing to the eye the long upward ascent of stone.

To her mood of the moment, while Rievers appeared less barren and more the abode of a human being, still there was the sinister atmosphere of a place of ill omen, which was not decreased by an open window and the movement of a hanging at one of the casements in the more modern part of the structure.

Even with the evidences of a home life about the tower—which there were not—the place would have worn its air of sullen tragedy, its seeming appearance of a center radiating unwholesome forces.

Then as she cantered along over a level expanse skirting the eminence upon which Rievers stood, and cast a glance upward occasionally, Lady Diana thought of what her grandfather had told her when she was a child. It was shortly after the death in the service of her father, and the death of his comrade, Robert, the Earl of Brancaster, in the same Indian engagement. Her father and Brancaster, sire of the present Brancaster, had planned that the little Lady Diana and the young Hubert should unite the fortunes and lands of the two almost princely houses. But her father had been killed and his father, too.

The young Earl, without the repressing authority of a parent, had begun life as a boy

with too much money and no sense of responsibility. His mother had died soon after he was born. He had not been a bad-natured lad, but as a little boy he had been precocious. What, under proper training, would have been clean, clear, pure sportsmanship as thorough as that of Lady Diana herself, became in him a mere gaming spirit. He gambled with nice observance of etiquette and of honor but still he defied chance. As a result he at last found himself in the hands of the money lenders and what part of Rievers that wasn't entailed was mortgaged.

There were women, too, in this young man's life, but of these Lady Diana knew nothing. But though they came and went, they never seemed to have penetrated to the core of the young Hubert to infect him with the virus of diseased imagination. The boy seemed asleep and too good natured to put his house in order. His friends predicted

that if he ever really aroused himself he would rid himself of his questionable acquaintances effectively, cleanly and finally.

Dismissing the supposedly dissolute, young belted Earl from her thoughts, Lady Diana came to the last fence which separated her from the glen in which the Falconhurst kennels and stables stood. From the level plateau immediately above the glen there floated down to her the shouts of the lads on the backs of the prides of the Marquis's stables. Beverley had held the lads in stern repression; but the stimulating air, the vast tonic of nervous horseflesh beneath their knees and the thrill of mad motion could not keep the youngsters entirely silent.

The fine fire of it all kindled Lady Diana. In the light of her girlhood experiences only such sounds as came to her from the Downs were needed to create vividly in her imagination active pictures of the scenes

above her. She knew it. She loved it. She wanted to be again a part of it.

In revolt at the things that she dimly sensed as governors of her whole after life, she had put spur to her horse and sent him straight at the high fence, beyond which waited the unknown,—in the figure of one who was to play a larger part in Lady Diana's future than either could have ever dreamed.

CHAPTER III

NO TRESPASSERS

WHEN the imperious person with the dark hair had borne away her somewhat unenthusiastic swain, thoughts of the two were out of the mind of Lady Diana before she had formulated any conscious conclusions, for her grandfather's whole string was now led into the yard of the stables. Though Tom Lambert, the trainer of the horses, was nominally in charge of all of the animals, he paid no attention to any save the nervous, skittish creature covered with her horse "clothing" and wearing over it all a horse rug. Lambert in person was leading her.

"Ah! Tom, there you are—why—what are you leading the Whip for?" Lady Diana exclaimed as she walked up to the trainer.

"Motor car, my lady!" Lambert explained, taking off his hat. "She don't like 'em."

Lady Diana smiled.

"She's not alone, Tom," she said.

"No, my lady, but 'owever *you* 'ates 'em, you can't *eat* 'em."

"And I shouldn't try," she laughed.

"She would, my lady!" the trainer continued, pointing to the horse. "The fitter she gets, the worse she gets. I believe she'd charge a battery an' eat the guns!"

"Nonsense!" Lady Diana replied, as she went up to the mare and patted her nose. "Nonsense! It's only because you don't understand her. She's a dear—isn't she, Harry?" And she looked up appealingly to the jockey who was stuck to the saddle as if he had grown there.

"With you, my lady," the boy answered. "And she's all right with me. But a

stranger would have a better time trying to tackle a tiger."

The girl stroked the Whip's neck lovingly.

"They'll find her a lion when they tackle her on the course—the first time she runs—won't they, Tom?" She turned to Lambert once more.

"Yes, my lady." Then, to the jockey—"Walk her on, Harry—mustn't get cold. This way! The paddock gate's open—take the rein, now we're off the road."

As Harry Anson, the Whip's jockey, turned his prancing mount toward the stables, Lambert held up a warning hand in a gesture of silence to his young mistress.

"What do you mean, Tom?" Lady Diana exclaimed.

"The Markis won't let me try 'er yet, my lady, but I believe the Whip's about the best mare as ever looked through a bridle."

"I don't care what she looks through, Tom, as long as she is the best."

Lambert shook his head in a pessimistic fashion.

"But the very best ship is no good without the man at the wheel." The trainer looked gloomily at the young girl.

"Surely Harry is good enough?" There was a world of surprise in her eager eyes.

"When he's himself," was Lambert's laconic answer.

"Who else is he?" Lady Diana asked, with a slight frown on her pretty, puzzled face.

"Don't know, my lady—but 'e's a 'ang-dog, mournful sort o' beggar at times, with no spirits and no lip—not a bit like *our* Harry."

Lady Di laughed blithely. There was a world of relief in her musical voice as she exclaimed:

"Sounds a bit like our Harry in love!"

"No, my lady!" Lambert said. And then,

in a confidential tone he continued—"I did think at one time, as he favored the second kitchen maid, but she was only a flash in the pan. It's worse than that."

Lady Diana was not averse to a bit of gossip with Tom Lambert, who had been her grandfather's trainer for almost thirty years.

"Not love? Not money—surely?" She was determined that the trainer should be more explicit.

"Shouldn't have thought it, my lady—he's that simple—"

"What else can he have on his mind then, Tom?"

Lambert threw up his hands in despair.

" 'Anged if I know, my lady," he replied. "But I don't want it on the Whip's back. Light heart makes light weight. But a bally boy with the blues thinks he's riding a 'earse 'orse."

"Oh! But Harry hasn't ridden like that yet!" she protested.

"No, my lady, not quite," Lambert admitted, "only—you see—well, then, if anything did go wrong with Harry, who else could ride our crack?"

"Tom!" Lady Diana exclaimed, with an unmistakable note of decision ringing clear in her voice, "we must find out what's the matter."

"Quietly, my lady—I wouldn't speak to the Markis about it just now. He's a bit irritable."

A troubled look crossed Lady Diana's pretty face.

"Yes—I've noticed it. What's wrong?" And she turned a searching gaze on the trainer's round and ruddy countenance.

Tom shook his head ominously. Then he glanced hurriedly around to see that there were no eavesdroppers about.

"Stable mouse has been squeaking," he explained in a low voice.

"What *do* you mean?" Lady Diana asked in a tone of exasperation. Her patience was becoming exhausted at Lambert's mysterious hints and peculiar manner.

"Stable secrets getting out, my lady—that's what I mean, to put it plain." Tom's fat face was worried into puckers.

"What! again? But I don't know why grandfather minds. He only races for the love of it. But it is strange."

"It is, my lady," Lambert hastened to say, in much excitement. "Licks me 'ollow! Gives his lordship touts on the brain! Do 'arf our work before daylight and if 'e sees a bush waggle 'e sends the 'orses 'ome—and still if we've anything worth backing somebody always knows. It's on 'is nerves, my lady. Why, the other morning he caught poor old Mother Griffiths near the Downs

picking mushrooms—ninety in the shade she is and blind as a kitten—but he swore if she did it again blest if he wouldn't raise her rent! And then cussed at 'er just as if 'e was talking to a bloomin' telephone! B'lieve he thinks there's touts in the stable chimbley—touts in the corn-bin—touts down the rabbit-'oles—an' touts a 'overing over'ead in 'eavenly aëroplanes whenever the 'orses so much as goes out for a walk. It's *toutitis,* my lady, and I'm catching it myself—a 'orrible illness, which I 'ave known drive even married men to drink!"

Lady Diana burst into peals of silvery laughter.

"As bad as that!" she cried. "Well, Tom, we must do our best to cure my grandfather at once."

"Yes, my lady," Tom replied. "Ah! here he is now!"

As Lambert spoke, Lady Diana's grandfather, the Marquis of Beverley, came rid-

ing into the yard in a village cart, driven by the Honorable Mrs. Beamish, the middle-aged, distant cousin of Lady Diana, and her companion.

The Marquis looked angrily up the road along which the strange automobile had borne away the artist and his insistent companion.

"Di! Di!" the Marquis called, with some heat.

"Yes, dear?" The caress in Lady Diana's answer was unmistakable. She helped the fine looking, elderly man out of the cart, as he asked, with impatience:—

"Who are those people in that confounded motor thing?"

"Strangers, dear—at least, to me!" she replied.

"They looked like a man and a woman," her grandfather sputtered.

"Yes, I thought so too," she answered teasingly.

"Don't be silly, Di! What were they doing?"

"I think she came to pick him up. He is an artist. I have seen him several times—sketching."

"Here?" And the Marquis' face grew a bit red.

"Yes—by the Bourne."

"Well, I won't have it!" he exploded. "You hear me? Give orders, Tom—for all we know the feller's a tout—confounded tout of the worst possible description!"

"He does not look it," Lady Diana said, quietly.

"They never do," the Marquis interposed, firmly. "Remember that chap who came here last year—playin' the photographer?"

Mrs. Beamish nodded vigorously to her esteemed relative.

"Yes, there you are," she put in. "Another artist—"

"Quite so," said the Marquis, finding an

appreciative audience. "Actually snapping the string at exercise—then bringin' an action against me for assault and battery!"

"After you put him under the stable pump, Lord Beverley," the Honorable Mrs. Beamish added, with emphasis.

"And broke his camera over his head and nearly broke his neck!" Lady Diana laughed, unable to restrain her amusement.

"Well! what did he expect?" the Marquis asked, with some show of surprise.

Tom Lambert came loyally to the support of his master.

"Quite right, my lord! No good having a dark horse if all the world knows it!"

"And they shan't know till the Two Thousand's over—and we've won it!" The Marquis' heart was set on winning the classic that took its name from the two thousand guineas of prize money that it offered annually to the winner.

"Rather! But—er—we—don't know as

we shall for sure till we try the mare, my lord. I do wish, sir, that you'd let us see what she can do against a good 'un." Lambert hung expectantly on the Marquis' words.

"Plenty of time for that, Tom—we don't want to leave the race on the trial ground—but we'll have no touts or trespassers on any ground." That the Marquis of Beverley was accustomed to having his own way in the world was unmistakable.

"Well, Grand-dad, you needn't trouble about this trespasser. I know he's an artist." Lady Diana put her hand lovingly upon her grandfather's arm. The proud old gentleman's face lit up as he looked down at her fondly and he said, gently—

"My dear, he wouldn't show his hand to you."

"He's shown me his sketch book, Grandfather."

"You've talked to him, then, Di?"

"Several times—"

"My dear, what about?" he expostulated.

"About art—scenery—the hounds—" she explained.

"But not about the 'orses, my lady?" Lambert interrupted.

"We didn't mention the horses!"

Mrs. Beamish cast a significant look at Lambert and remarked, sarcastically—

"What a dull conversation!"

The Marquis of Beverley disregarded Mrs. Beamish's sarcasm, and he patted Lady Diana's hand as he said gently—

"Well, don't do it again, dear, please. I don't like strangers—especially about the horses."

"You don't like anyone near them, Grandfather. We've got a house full of friends, but you send them all away to hunt otters with Greville and practically warn them off the Downs." Lady Diana's hospitable soul

had often been hurt by her Grandfather's high-handed treatment of guests.

"Seems a bit churlish I dare say, Di,—but I race for myself, not the crowd. Don't forget our old saying 'A Yorkshireman's house is his friend's, but a Yorkshireman's horse is his own.' I'll never let our horses be turned into public betting machines if I can help it—so no more talks with strangers, Di, you understand me." And with a gesture of finality the strong-willed old gentleman drew Lady Diana with him toward the stables.

Tom Lambert turned to Mrs. Beamish with a most confidential manner.

"And a good thing, too, if I may say so, Mrs. B.," he remarked.

"What do you mean?"

"You know how free Lady Di is," Lambert explained. "She'll pass the time o' day with anyone—of course at her age she don't know no better."

"I know she knows no worse," Mrs. Beamish retorted with a slight rasp in her voice.

"But the other party may," said the trainer, in a low voice.

"Lambert!"

"Well, I say artists ain't no class to come hanging round after Lady Di," Tom hastened to add.

"There are artists and artists—"

"That's my meaning, Mrs. B.—p'raps this one's worse than usual."

"Thank goodness I have a pure mind," was Mrs. Beamish's acid retort.

The insinuation wasted itself upon Tom Lambert's sensibilities, which were not exactly of the æsthetic variety.

"I wonder what those two were talking about," he said, thoughtfully.

"What two?" Mrs. Beamish inquired.

"Why, Lady Di and that artist chap, of course—if he didn't come here after the horses—what did he come after?"

"Tom Lambert—I'm afraid you've got a suspicious mind," Mrs. Beamish informed him.

"Well, I won't conceal from you, Mrs. B., that a racing stable ain't a place that inspires you with much confidence in human nature, and when I hear of a young man talking to a young woman—and she *is* a young woman—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Tom—"

"I don't—I put two and two together—"

"When there's only one and one—" Mrs. Beamish interposed with a somewhat vicious emphasis.

"My experience teaches me—" Lambert continued, ignoring the thrust.

"If I were you, Tom Lambert, I should feel a bit delicate about referring to my experience." And Mrs. Beamish turned her back upon the now discomfited Lambert.

"I've seen you," she continued, "talking with a certain young woman."

"What young woman?" asked Tom, with mouth open in astonishment.

"Myrtle Anson—I've seen you!"

"Well, I like that!" Lambert gasped.

"It looked it! Catch you doing it if you didn't—trust a man—not that I do—"

"Don't you trust me—Mrs. B., after all these years?" Tom's eyes, as well as his voice, spoke endless devotion.

"Tom Lambert, I won't conceal from you that a man about a racing stable is not one who inspires me with unlimited confidence."

It was quite apparent that the temperature in Mrs. Beamish's vicinity was rapidly approaching the freezing point.

"Well, I'm blest!" Lambert remonstrated. "Just because I had a few words with the girl to ask her what's the matter with young Harry."

"H'm! I hope *Old* Harry had nothing to do with it!"

"Betty!" And Tom moved nearer to the object of his affection.

"Mrs. Beamish, if you please—" said the outraged lady with a toss of her head.

"Mrs. Beamish—honorable madam—you're jealous!" the trainer exclaimed, delighted that it was so.

"Of you? I? Never!" returned the flame of his youth.

"Not now, perhaps," he returned, temporizing. "But in the old days don't you remember how wild you was with me—about little Susie Dobbs—when you and me was keeping company—"

"We never kept company," returned the Hon. Mrs. Beamish, furious.

"Well, if we didn't, then we ought to have kept company," answered the literal Tom, "with me walking out with you and kissing you."

"Once only, and by accident," cut in the

elderly flame of days when the Beverley stables were smaller.

"Well, I suppose a collision's an accident, but I liked it and so did you," said Lambert.

"I didn't," denied Mrs. Beamish.

"You and I were happy," went on the Whip's master, "till Beamish came along and you got taken with him. I can't forget you, Betty, and what might have happened. Don't you ever remember, Betty, before you was a great lady?"

The air of the woman toward Tom was kinder that it had been for some time.

"I'm not a great lady, Tom," she said gently, for one of her vigorous personality. "I'm a poor relation, though Lord Beverley doesn't treat me like one—but I am! I'm lady Di's companion and distant cousin by marriage. I'm a sort of female major-domo of the household—and I'm very happy, Tom. I'm not a snob, but I've got to re-

member that I'm the Honorable Mrs. Beamish—that I'm Lord Beverley's cousin by marriage—that he looks upon me as one of the family—that I mustn't disgrace it by —by—"

"Thinking of the likes of me," said Tom sadly. "All you think of is that you've married into a noble family—not that you came out of—of—a—h'm—"

"Out of a shop. Oh, you needn't mind saying it. I'm not ashamed of it."

"Why should you be?" went on Lambert. "Ah, they don't make shops like that nowadays. I can see it now as if it was yesterday, and smell it. And what apples your mother did sell. Many's the time she's give me one when I was a nipper. Lord! I wish Captain Beamish had never been quartered in our town—never set eyes on you."

"I made him a good wife, Tom," said Betty, a shade of regret in her voice.

"I'll be bound you did! But you'd have made me a better, if only you hadn't been educated above your station. I mean above mine. Ain't it no good my hoping, Betty?"

A trifle sadly the Hon. Mrs. Beamish smiled as she said, with an air meant to be final:

"No good, Tom! If ever I feel weak I take down the Peerage and look up Beverley —Geoffrey Vandeleur Delacroix George Jocelyn, tenth Marquis of —— and it strengthens me to do my duty in that station of life."

"To which it did not please God to call you," supplemented Tom Lambert decisively when she hesitated.

Realizing the futility of further argument, Mrs. Beamish made her way toward the great house, leaving poor Tom to extract such comfort as he could from his beloved horses.

CHAPTER IV

A MOUSE IN THE STABLE

ALL the morning Capt. Greville Sartoris, the cousin of Lady Diana, and the heir to the Beverley title, though the fortune would go to the Marquis's granddaughter, had led the greater portion of the house party in an otter hunt.

Now, with the hounds that they had taken for their rather tame hunt in full cry, they were pursuing a large she-otter the dogs had started. Through the open the little creature fled, followed by the yelping pack—not that, of course, with which Lady Diana had run—and the party of men and women on foot with their savage otter spears.

The animal had found its courses along the little stream no longer in their accustomed solitude, so now she seemed to feel

that there would be safety in going toward the spots never deserted.

In any event she broke cover completely and made for the kennels and stables, still, however, keeping close to the east bank of the Bourne.

Across the stable yard the small pursued object scurried in an effort to get far enough away to make a dive into a deep pool there. Over the retaining walls and other obstacles in their path leaped the men of the party. Sartoris was first, but after he had made one frenzied lunge with his spear he realized that the otter had escaped.

With an exclamation of anger he buried his spear in the ground, and then looked up to find the amused but scornful eyes of his cousin upon him.

"Don't, Greville, it's horrible," the girl exclaimed, while her grandfather was showing the fox hounds and some of his famous racing string to the visitors.

"What is?" Sartoris asked, not realizing that the girl was condemning a pastime that he regarded as sport.

"Otter killing—like that—otter hunting," she answered.

"But you like fox hunting?" went on Sartoris in the bland tones of surprise of the Englishman of his wiry type, with his wisp of a mustache and his weak appearing figure, which hid considerable skilled strength. "You like to see a draggled, beaten fox torn to pieces alive."

"No, I don't," interrupted the girl.

"But it's done," went on the man.

"I know," said the girl. "That's why if I were a man I'd ride nothing but steeplechases. I love a run best when the fox gets clean away. I love a race with neither whip nor spur! I love sport—and in the best sport there's no pain!"

It was for such speeches as that—and actions, too—that they called Lady Di-

ana "the cleanest sportswoman in all England."

"Not if you're beaten?" questioned the cousin.

"Not if you played fair," said the girl.

Her cousin was moved to reveal—almost unconsciously—some of that queer sporting philosophy which sustained him in the somewhat questionable practices which were already being commented upon in his London clubs.

"I confess I have a weakness for winning," he said with an air of frankness. "Whatever the odds in your favor, there is a certain pleasure in pursuit—in getting home."

As to give emphasis to his words, he drove the head of his spear into the ground. He raised his eyes and, with a start, found Myrtle Anson, the young sister of Harry Anson, the Whip's jockey, near him. She

had come quietly into the yard and, as if moved by an impulse of her budding woman's heart that she could not entirely control, had gone straight toward Sartoris. Lady Diana had not seen the girl, for the back of the Marquis's granddaughter was turned to this more humble young woman.

For a moment Sartoris regarded the girl, then with a slight move of his shoulders he turned away. Myrtle Anson, seemingly cut to the heart, sank on a rock at the edge of the stream and continued to watch him with eyes of love.

This little bit of by-play had consumed but a moment, and while it was taking place and Sartoris was still eyeing the sister of the jockey, Lady Diana was replying to his last observation:

"There's pleasure in getting home? On a weak thing that can't defend itself—or strike back?"

Her words seemed to the sick conscience of Sartoris to hold a *double entendre,* and he looked sharply at his cousin.

"Eh?" he exclaimed, suspiciously and expectantly.

But Lady Diana, who had noticed nothing and was but speaking of the immediate subject before them, went on:

"I mean a weak thing like an otter. In sport there must be a fair chance."

It was with genuine relief that Sartoris answered:

"I know, but I prefer lowest weight in life's handicap—a shade of odds in my favor, when I'm trying to win. But you're a girl and mix sentiment with your sporting."

The women of the house party now claimed the attention of Lady Diana as they called upon her to explain the points of some of the racers. About them during this time the anxious Marquis hovered.

He had ordered the Whip put in a locked box stall, and not even the most charming entreaties of the fairest of his guests could induce him to unlock the door.

With a furtive glance about him, Sartoris walked toward Myrtle Anson sitting like a lowly muse of tragedy by the Bourne. This quick glance of Sartoris was by no means a precaution, for he knew that the few words that he might publicly exchange with the pretty sister of the jockey would not cause any comment, but his act was one of instinct. There was something furtive and almost sinister about this sportsman who took care to win when he could without causing too much of a scandal, and his rapid survey of the position of his equals was the tribute to his own caution.

But the first words he spoke to the girl were ordinary enough. He disliked "emotion and all that sort of nonsense, you know," and he did not often exhibit it.

"Morning, Miss Anson. Been botanizing again?" he asked, lifting his hat and pointing to a leather case she carried slung over her shoulder.

"Yes," said the girl in a dull monotone.

"Up on the Wold?" he asked, lowering his voice with that cautious instinct, though there was no one to hear them.

"How I could see the Wold," said the girl, meaning creeping between her words.

"With glasses?" he persisted.

For answer the girl showed him a pair of field glasses concealed in the case.

"Anything worth seeing?"

Bitterly she replied:

"No—opponent Silver Shoe—the Rover and the Whip—a striding gallop, but nothing like a trial."

There was that in her voice which would have told an expert in human nature that the girl despised herself for what she was

doing, but that she could not resist the demands of this man.

But the cousin of Lady Diana did not honor the girl with the slightest concern for her feeling. He was thinking only of the horses and of how many times he had won handily because of some bit of stable information he had been able to extract from the girl.

"I wonder if their dark horse is worth anything?" he went on, his gambler's sense playing in and out of a series of calculations as to odds and weights. "What a pile one could win if one knew! Twenty to one! Look here, Myrtle, you can pump your brother, if you like. He must know."

"He won't tell," said the girl, almost sullenly.

The tone of the Captain was kinder, now that he had found something that the girl could do for him.

"You can make him," he said.

"I can't," she answered, her breast rising and falling. "I believe he suspects—"

"You?"

"You."

"Me?" exclaimed Sartoris.

There was self-loathing, accusation and defiance of all the world in the girl's face.

"You and me," she said slowly, but almost savagely.

But if he felt any impending danger at her words Sartoris did not show it. There was almost bantering humor in his face, as the girl hurried on in little panting gasps:

"My brother used to tell me everything. When he told me stable secrets I told you—I have been a traitor to him—and a traitor to them all—I have betrayed Lady Di, whom I love—I have sold out Lord Beverly, who gave us a home and everything we have in the world—and I have forgotten all that and have sold him out—sold him out

for nothing at all—nothing in the whole wide world. A girl only does that for one reason, and my brother knows that."

With white fury Sartoris turned upon her. For a moment it seemed as though he would hurl at her the heavy spear in his hand.

"You've told him?" he demanded savagely.

Myrtle faced him bravely, but in a moment her head drooped.

"No—I haven't turned traitor to you, Greville," she said brokenly.

Into the whole manner of the Captain there came a great change. He was as near to pity as his shallow nature ever permitted as he said fervently:

"Of course, you haven't, little Myrtle."

Instantly the jockey's sister moved closer to him. He took one quick step backward and his tone became lighter as he hurried on to bridge the gap of emotion:

"But, come, now, don't talk heroics—

about traitors and things. Beverley never bets. If the wide world knew his stable secrets it would do no harm. If you give me a tip or two—heaven knows I want it badly enough—who's hurt?"

"I am," said the girl, much of her resistance gone because of his few kindly words of the moment, too soon passed. "And I shan't do it again."

"Nonsense! You'll tell me when the Whip's tried."

"I shan't be here to see."

"No?"

"No—I can't stay here much longer, I dare not."

"Nonsense, where will you go?"

"Isn't that for you to say? Haven't you promised?"

Sartoris shrugged his shoulders, and then became aware that Harry Anson was standing near the main door of the stables with anxious, speculative eyes upon him. He

left Myrtle and strolled toward the stable. His eyes for a moment looked keenly into the face of the boy, and then, with a sudden, unwilling movement of his head, he turned aside, unable, despite his wonderful customary self-control, to face Myrtle's brother.

But Harry Anson's eyes did not waver.

CHAPTER V

THE ACCIDENT

LORD BEVERLEY was worried over something the women of his granddaughter's house party had told him. They had described the course of the otter hunt and this description had displeased him exceedingly, though he was at much pains not to let the women see it. Accordingly, he went straight to Captain Sartoris, whom he instinctively disliked, though he tried to overcome that feeling.

"Greville," exclaimed the Marquis, "I'm afraid from what I hear that you went trespassing this morning."

"Oh, did we?" exclaimed Sartoris, lightly, not attaching much importance to the opinions of the racing Marquis upon any subject.

"Yes, from beyond the bend where the Bourne winds through the Brancaster property," Beverley continued, in a modified tone.

"Of course—so it does," answered Sartoris. "Well, we didn't go far. Surely it doesn't matter. As a neighbor Brancaster wouldn't object."

Beverley frowned as he went on in his ponderous and bombastic tone:

"He's a neighbor to whom I object—certainly not one from whom I'd ask favors."

One of the women of the house party, Lady Antrobus, had overheard the two men use the name Brancaster. Of Lady Antrobus it had been said that "she rushed in where—well, you know, my dear." Her shrewish curiosity made her anxious to know what they were saying of Brancaster, so, despite the breeding of her line, she interjected herself into the conversation.

"Lord Brancaster will have to sell the

Rievers for a song if he goes on racing so desperately," she said.

She was an old neighbor of the Marquis, and her chance touching upon a hobby of Beverley aroused his ire.

"Pardon me," said he, "*betting* so desperately. Gambling is not racing."

"He's a wonderfully cool gambler," went on the chatty tongue of his feminine neighbor. "I saw him at Sandown last Autumn betting over the rail with all the bookmakers on the other side raging at him like a pack of wolves."

Sartoris himself had taken the other end of some of these bets, and his smile was rueful as he put in:

"With Kelly, the Leviathan, leading them, hurling the odds at his head in thousands."

It was plain that Lady Antrobus, who had known of Brancaster since he was a boy, had a sort of admiration for him.

"And he never turned a hair," she went on. "I believe he loves the excitement."

The failure of the plan of the father of Lady Diana and of Brancaster had left a deep bitterness in the heart of Beverley. The good man's bark was worse than his bite, however.

The Marquis felt that a man of his own position and morality owed it to the world to point out every horrible example, even if that example were the son of an old family friend. "For how otherwise can the rising generation get the proper moral perspective?" he had asked more than once.

So now he did not hesitate, though he was well aware that his utterances would place him in the light of seeming rather less of a gentleman than he was, in the minds of those who might not understand his real feeling in this and related matters.

"He won't love paying for it," he said, "and for his other follies"— Even

Beverley felt that he was going too far.

But the mind of Lady Antrobus was alert for any bit of gossip.

"Are they so very costly?" she continued, hoping to open the doors of the Marquis's indignation.

But Lord Beverley glanced at Lady Diana not very far off. Then he coughed, as he returned hesitatingly:

"Hem—er—I have heard so."

Mrs. Antrobus added fuel to what she felt was a flame about to expire.

"I've only met him once," she said, with the air of one contradicting the Marquis, "and I thought he'd charming manners and was quite good looking. Every youngster must sow his wild oats, you know, my dear Marquis."

Lady Antrobus had partially succeeded. Beverley did not, it is true, add to her fund of knowledge regarding the escapades of Brancaster, but he did express his own opin-

ion most forcibly, though in his somewhat stilted phrase.

"Certainly, let him sow all the wild oats he wishes," he said, "but not in my garden. If you women of position in social England did your duty, a boy like Brancaster would be cut. Yes, and we men are just as much to blame too, for we should cut him for your sakes. We smile too much and look the other way in these days. Many a youngster would be saved from perdition if his elders only spoke out as men and gentlemen should speak, as I myself would speak to Brancaster, if he ever came here.

"If we all acted as we should in regard to these spendthrift boys and these wastrels more than half of them would turn from their folly and become worthy of their ancestors. If Brancaster ever came to Falconhurst I would not hesitate to say to him: 'While my women folk live in my house, you are not welcome within it.'"

Lady Antrobus sighed at thought of the young Earl, who was so unwelcome in the home of the friends of his father. She might have returned to the attack, but at this moment a loud cry from Captain Rayner, one of the men of the house party, drew not only her attention but that of Beverley and all the rest as well.

Rayner was standing near the highway, which passed not very far from a corner of the stables, and he was looking upward along the tortuous course of the road as it steadily mounted to the highlands.

Down that road from the plateau above, a large touring automobile was rushing, swaying from side to side as the man at the wheel desperately took the many turns in the course. There was a woman beside him. Suddenly she arose and screamed. A moment later she had jumped from the car, and was standing in safety in the

road watching the terrifying descent of the automobile.

Not all of the women in the group at the Falconhurst stables saw the woman after she had left the lurching vehicle, as some of them were too occupied with their own fears and terrors. For gradually, after their first moments of amazement, they realized that the car was beyond control.

After the woman jumped the man looked backward for just a fleeting instant as though assuring himself that she was safe. Then he doubled over his wheel.

To the autoists among the watchers it was soon apparent that the man in the car possessed no means of checking its momentum. Plainly the brakes were not working. As he came nearer and nearer to them they could see that he was fumbling with his change gear lever, in an effort to throw the reverse into mesh and check the car. But

something stuck and the gears did not engage. The Lady Diana moved closer to the road, her face white, but self-possessed. She thought that she recognized the staunch figure in the car, which through some deep-seated instinct of sportsmanship did not, and had not, attempted to leave its seat.

Making a megaphone of her hands she called up:

"Throw in your first—throw in your first —that'll slacken you."

But even before she spoke the man in the car had been attempting to do so. The lever shot forward, and then before he could try to mesh the gears, the car careened on two wheels. The rider's hand was forced to quit the lever and with his other hand grasp more firmly the wheel.

He rounded the curve and literally fell, car and man, down the last descent that separated him from the bit of road beside the Falconhurst stables. Now he seemed to

have clear sailing, for the road ran straight, and half a mile beyond the stables there was a slight rise that would be more than sufficient to check the speed of the car, intense though it was.

As the car and man blurred past Lady Diana she thought she caught from the car the words, "Thank you," and the flash of a hand waved in the air.

The next instant there was a thunderous crash, followed by the manifold and multitudinous sounds of separate mechanisms of metal being rent asunder all in one second, yet following one another in minute fractions of that second.

The eye of the rider must have deviated from his course in that brief moment when he had waved his hand and called his thanks to the girl who had had the presence of mind to shout to him the only thing possible in that crisis.

His car, deviating ever so slightly in that

instant, had rushed into the stone corner of the bridge just at the side of the footpath. It lay in fragments and twisted bits of metal. The man, hurled to the middle of the highway, sprawled there, bleeding and unconscious.

For a long moment men and women stood without moving. Then Rayner and Beverley broke the spell, and a half dozen of them darted forward, took up the form in the road and carried it into the stable yard. Upon her arm Lady Diana received the limp, hanging head, as they put the man upon the ground.

"Quick, Lambert, some brandy," ordered Beverley to the Whip's trainer.

"Grandfather, he's dying," Lady Diana exclaimed pityingly.

Then she looked long into the face.

"It's the stranger, my artist," she said, a vast sadness falling upon her as she saw the wrist, lying there limp, upon which not so

long before her hunter had set its mark. He had laughed so blithely and had taken so good-naturedly what had seemed to her a matter of so much concern, and here he lay dead, or dying. Poor stranger! Poor artist! But a step from laughter to death! she reflected sadly.

Now Lambert had brought the brandy but he did not hand it to the Marquis as he caught sight of the poor, pale face.

"My lord, it's the man we thought a tout," he said to his employer.

"I can't help that," answered Beverley impatiently. "The pony cart, quick! The man's hurt. We must take him to the house at once—at once!"

Captain Sartoris had been looking into the face of the inert stranger on the ground for several moments in a puzzled fashion. He knew that he knew the man, but the banishment of consciousness had made such a difference in the features that for the mo-

ment he could not identify them. Suddenly he made an exclamation.

"Good heavens, cousin! Do you see who this is?" came from him as his memory cleared.

The Marquis looked at the man on the ground and then into the face of the Captain, an unspoken inquiry in his own eyes.

Sartoris took a deep breath, the better to subdue his own lively astonishment.

"It's—it's—Brancaster," he said.

CHAPTER VI

THE TIME—AND THE PARSON

FOR six days now Lord Brancaster had lain in one of the lofty old bed-chambers of the ancient house of Falconhurst. He had not regained consciousness for a moment since the day of the accident.

Despite the words of censure the Marquis of Beverley had spoken of the Earl of Brancaster there was nothing for him to do now save to try to efface them in every possible way.

Beverley had done more than the situation demanded. It was as if the injury which had fallen upon the Earl had wiped out all the past and had brought to the old racing nobleman a renewed consciousness of the brotherhood of man. The most noted physicians and surgeons of London had been

summoned by him, and Sir Andrew Beck, whose very retaining cast a distinction upon any family able to induce the great surgeon to visit them, was even now in consultation with some half dozen of the kingdom's greatest surgical experts. There was a question as to whether they would try an operation in the hope of relieving the pressure upon the patient's brain, but the consensus of opinion was against it.

The chamber in which Brancaster lay had been the abode of more than one fugitive nobleman in the days of the Commonwealth, which had followed the ascendency of the Puritans after the execution of Charles I, and there was a well-authenticated legend that "Bonnie Prince Charlie" himself had once been sheltered there when there was a price upon his head.

But certainly never before had the old apartment occupied by the unconscious Brancaster had a more lovely aspect. There

were flowers everywhere, but not in the profusion that would have meant annoyance to the ill man had he been conscious of them. There were lilies of the valley in the old stone vase, built into the ancient, disused fireplace. Their white loveliness was accentuated by the long trailing vines that formed their background. For Lady Diana had seen to the comfort and decoration of the apartment of the man she was sure could not be entirely bad.

The accident to this young man in the prime of his life had done much to soften her pride of the very young, and she realized that her judgment was harsh.

In these days she accepted nearly everything without question. When the woman she had seen with Brancaster, on the day he was known to her merely as the artist, called at Falconhurst and asked to be allowed to sit by the side of the unconscious man, the girl had led her without question to the bed-

chamber, though her grandfather had subsequently seen that a footman performed that office.

Lady Diana had not inquired as to the woman visitor anything more than her name. The "Mrs. D'Aquila" she had received told her nothing, and she did not ask other information as to the dark, foreign appearing woman who seemed to take Brancaster's injury so deeply to heart.

There was within Lady Diana a deep spiritual sense. She felt that the stricken Earl might die,—indeed she had heard it so whispered, though the Marquis tried to spare her such thoughts as these. She felt in her pure consciousness of small sin that if he died without receiving benefit of the Church of England, or of any clergyman, there would be a cloud upon both his chances in a world which might understand him better, and upon her own conscience as well. She could not forget those murmured

words as the car shot by her, and that waving of the hand. Surely "that within us which makes for righteousness" could not ignore such a spirit. His was a rare soul, which must have its chance in that void into which hourly it seemed about to escape.

So she had dispatched a note to the vicar, innocently unmindful of the fact that "Sporting Jack" Thorpe rode far better to hounds than he did to grace, and that even then he was taking the cure for gout far from the village, the great name of which was Beverley.

To-day, just as the sun was about to set, she was waiting on the terrace of the Italian Garden for the appearance of Thorpe in answer to her summons. As she walked to and fro along the terrace, with many glances down the little path—known to her friends who did not wish to drive a mile along the road before they reached the castle—she was joined by her cousin, Captain Greville Sar-

toris. The captain was, as usual, "devilishly hard up," as he was wont to put it, and he was trying to evolve a way to make a "killing."

As Sartoris descended the terrace steps Lady Diana stood looking earnestly in the direction of the village.

"No sign of anyone coming," the Captain remarked.

"They must have got my note at the vicarage!" Lady Diana said with anxiety, as she turned appealingly to her cousin.

"Would your parson come this way—by the private gate?"

"Oh! yes, Greville—all our friends near the village do, if they don't want to drive a mile up the Front Avenue."

Sartoris shrugged his shoulders.

"P'raps the old chap ain't well. Didn't we hear he'd a touch of gout?"

"Yes, yes, and he wrote he was going to Harrogate for a cure, but not until next

week, I think." It was clear that Lady Diana was greatly alarmed over the condition of the injured man.

"Is there really much for a parson to do here, Di? Poor Brancaster has never been conscious since the smash." Captain Sartoris regarded his pretty cousin closely and a slight irritation upset for the moment the man's accustomed *sang froid.*

"Nearly six days—hanging between life and death—and now at any minute he may—" The girl stopped abruptly, unable or unwilling to speak the dreaded word.

"At any minute, my dear Di, he's just as likely to wake up. When he does, believe me he won't ask for a parson. He'll ask for the lady who is sitting by him now." And there was just a trace of unpleasantness in the Captain's low laugh.

"Mrs. D'Aquila? . . . She seems very devoted to him, Greville," Lady Diana said slowly.

"Comes over from the Rievers three times a day!" There was a certain innuendo in Capt. Sartoris' remark.

"She was staying there I suppose with—er—with—"

"With a tame chaperone, Di—she does everything quite correctly." It was quite evident that Greville found something particularly amusing in Lord Brancaster's mysterious visitor.

"I ought to be sorry—she looks so anxious and troubled." Lady Diana turned a worried face toward her jaunty cousin.

"Hem. No doubt she is," the Captain answered drily.

"Greville! . . . Who is Mrs. D'Aquila?" the girl asked him point-blank.

Sartoris looked at her quizzically as he slowly exhaled the smoke from his cigarette before replying.

"She *was* a married woman," he said, "moving in good society. She *is*—er—still

received in some society. She is exactly the sort of woman that suits the Brancaster sort of man. She is not the sort of woman your grandfather would wish me to discuss with you."

"I'm not a girl, Greville. What is the attraction about such a woman?"

"The attraction of curry and cayenne pepper for people whose appetites have been spoiled by hot living," was the Captain's reply.

There were countless unspoken questions halting on Lady Diana's lips as she regarded Sartoris sadly. It was some time before she spoke. And then she said—"Do they never get tired of curry? I should have thought too much of it would have made them absolutely long for—for —"

"Milk and sponge cake?" the Captain interrupted. "Very seldom. It's always difficult to break oneself of a bad habit.

Mrs. D'Aquila is a very bad habit," and he sent his cigarette spinning into the shrubbery.

"Dressed up, painted, dyed—" Lady Diana enumerated, as if she were counting the seven sins.

"Brancaster's taste, my dear Di."

"For—curried hair, Greville? It isn't natural." Lady Diana had a saving sense of humor that never allowed her to be long downcast.

"What?" Sartoris inquired.

"Both. If he could only be cut free—got away from—from—" she hesitated.

"From that sort of thing? Quite so—he'd drift back to it, my dear Di—they always do!" And the Captain spoke with the conviction of one much experienced.

"You think all men are alike, Greville!" she protested.

"I know all women are not—and the more I see of—of women like Mrs.

D'Aquila—the more I know it: the sweeter, the fresher, the dearer, seems the natural real true girl—the girl like you, Di." Sartoris bent over his cousin and his hand brushed hers momentarily, almost as if through accident. He turned quickly, and leaning over the marble balustrade of the pool, went on—

"You've been an awfully good pal to me, Di."

"Have I, Greville?"

"Yes. When Beverley cut up rough —"

"Nonsense," the girl broke in. "Granddad's rich. If you got hard up—well—you're the next heir."

"To the title—empty," the Captain answered shortly. "You'll take the fortune. Your father would have had both. That's why Beverley resents me, if he don't absolutely dislike me. He'd be happy if you were a boy."

Lady Diana clenched her hands and glanced up proudly at the great house.

"I often wish I were," she said with real regret. "We belong to the place as much as it belongs to us. But when it's mine I shall be the first who won't be called 'Marquis of Beverley.'"

"You might be called 'Marchioness,'" her cousin murmured.

"No, that would be the title of your wife, Greville."

"Your title—if you were my wife," the man answered slowly, turning.

"Greville!"—she exclaimed, with a catch in her voice.

"Title and estate brought together again, Di! Is it quite impossible? I've never talked love and—nonsense to you. But I've learned to love you very really—for yourself—and because I've seen the world and know your worth in it. I'm not a saint—but every hour with you makes a man

better—makes him try to be more worthy —is it quite impossible?" Greville Sartoris had made love to many women in his time, but with all his tremendous assurance he found it just a bit difficult to say these things to his cousin.

"Greville! *Quite.*"

She stopped him with a gesture that forbade him to continue. "And please for good friendship's sake, for cousinship, never again—" She did not finish, but started forward suddenly as a dark figure defined itself in the deepening shadows and came quickly nearer. It was a man in clericals.

"Ah, at last!" Lady Diana breathed with a world of relief. And then she saw that it was a stranger. "I beg your pardon—" she apologized.

"Lady Diana Sartoris?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"My name is Haslam," the newcomer ex-

plained. "I am taking the vicar's duty—while he is away. You sent a message, you know."

"Yes. Lord Brancaster met with an accident some days ago—he is lying here at our house—and his condition has become so—so serious—that it seemed best to send for the vicar."

"I greatly regret. His Lordship has expressed a wish—?"

"He has never recovered consciousness," Lady Diana said, soberly. "We felt it would be so sad, so terrible, if—if—" and she stopped and turned her head away.

Mr. Haslam drew a step nearer.

"If the end should come without the consolations of the Church?" he continued for her. "Though, indeed, if he is insensible—and can neither speak nor hear—" He hesitated, but the man's meaning was obvious.

"Heaven hears always, doesn't it, Mr. Haslam?" Lady Diana asked.

The Reverend Mr. Haslam inclined his head.

"Greville," and Lady Diana turned to her cousin, "tell the doctor Mr. Haslam is going to Lord Brancaster—if there is no objection."

"Certainly," said Sartoris, "though I'm sure he'll feel as I do that the poor sufferer will be greatly benefited by the ministrations of so eminent a divine as the Rev. Verner Haslam!"

The clergyman started slightly—imperceptibly, almost—at the Captain's words, and Greville Sartoris strolled away in the direction of the house, laughing silently.

"This way, please," Lady Diana said to the minister. And then, with some surprise she asked, "Do you know my cousin?"

"I—I did," Haslam replied. "At Ox-

ford. We have not met for many years."

Then with another troubled look at Sartoris he passed toward the house with Lady Diana.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRIALS OF LOVE

ACROSS the meadows and through Beverley Wood, Harry Anson, the Whip's jockey, followed his sister. The manner of the girl was furtive and occasionally she looked back as though she suspected she was being followed.

At such times Harry, in the dusk of the evening, took advantage of whatever cover there was. So Myrtle, without being more than half-conscious of another's presence, finally arrived in the Italian Garden that stretched and sloped away from Falconhurst to the south. Now, he thought, he would find out to whom Myrtle had been giving news of the racers in the Beverley stables. But in his haste to enter the garden too, and conceal himself, he stumbled

over a small rose bush whose branches had escaped a needed trimming by the gardener.

With a shudder Myrtle turned and saw him. But, nevertheless, with the strategy of a woman, she at once put him on the defensive.

"Harry!" she exclaimed to her brother.

"Well?" was the rejoinder.

"What—what are you doing here?"

"Lord Beverley sent for me," Harry answered. "I'm going up to the house. What are you doing?"

"N—nothing," she faltered.

"You seem frightened about it," he said with cutting sarcasm.

"I'm not."

"Who are you looking for?" he demanded, drawing nearer. "Who have you come to meet?"

"No one," she declared.

"That's a lie!" he almost shouted. "I've watched you across the meadow—down by

the woodside—thinking you weren't seen —"

"I didn't come here to meet anybody," she said timidly.

"And it's not the first time," Harry added.

"It's nothing to you," she told him bluntly.

"Yes, it is. Someone's been talking. Things have got out about the horses. Who talks?"

"I don't know."

"I do," the boy went on, unable to control his anger. "A girl. Who for? Someone who's making a fool of her."

"What do I know of the horses, Harry?" she asked, thoroughly frightened. "You never tell me anything—as you used to do."

Harry's suspicion would not be denied.

"Good reason," he snarled. "But others may—and you may fetch and carry tales outside for them—if it's no worse than

that," he finished lamely, with a choke in his voice.

"Worse?" the girl stammered.

"Yes," her brother answered. "But I'll find the blackguard out, and if I do—" He stopped suddenly, as he heard footsteps along the path, and shrank back against the bushes under the terrace just in time to escape being seen by Tom Lambert.

"Ah! Myrtle," Tom's cheery voice called out, as he recognized the girl, "his lordship's just sent for Harry, and now I want you—"

Harry burst out of his hiding place and confronted the astonished trainer.

"You do! do you?" he growled in Lambert's face. "And what for?"

Tom was quite taken aback at the sudden onslaught.

"What the deuce is wrong with you, Harry Anson?" he asked with amazement.

"I'll stand no wrong—not with my sister," the boy blustered.

"Young idiot," returned Lambert, savagely aware that the world seemed in conspiracy with Mrs. Beamish.

"Perhaps," exclaimed Harry; "but I'm not a blackguard."

Just then Mrs. Beamish came slowly toward the house and then stopped abruptly as she heard their heated words.

"For tuppence I'd put my stick around you," shouted the furious Lambert, raising his cane.

"I've found the stable mouse, Mr. Lambert," went on Harry, rage blinding his eyes and judgment alike. "Someone tells Myrtle stable secrets for her to send outside. And why does she do it? Won't a girl do anything for a man when he's fooled her, got her under his thumb?"

Lambert could stand nothing more, and

he seized the boy by the shoulder, shaking him savagely while he raised his stick for chastisement.

Quickly Mrs. Beamish interposed, released Harry and stepped between them, much as a referee might have done in the prize ring.

"If you'd only heard what he said," panted Lambert, ready to take advantage of the slightest opening between the two men that Mrs. Beamish might leave.

"I did," she returned in her dry tone of suspicion. "He has my sympathy."

The fight left the spirit of Lambert at once. This woman whom he loved was forever suspecting him groundlessly.

"You think I'd go courting a girl that age?" he said mournfully to his elderly flame.

Mrs. Beamish smiled bitterly.

"I certainly hoped you knew better at your age," she snapped.

Then, with an abrupt resumption of that dignity which became her so well, she sent Myrtle back to the Anson cottage and Harry to see Lord Beverley.

"And when you get back to the stable," Lambert could not resist calling after Harry, "you know what's waiting for you."

"Coward!" sputtered Mrs. Beamish when they were once more alone.

"Cat!" retorted the outraged trainer. "Only a woman would believe a lot of gossip like that."

"I've seen you talking to the girl," returned Mrs. Beamish coldly and haughtily.

"There was something wrong with the boy," explained Lambert.

"Now we know what it is," came from her.

"Well, I will be—," began Lambert.

"You certainly will be if you don't reform at once," she said tartly, as she gathered her skirts carefully about her, ready

to leave him with all the scorn at the command of fluttering petticoats. "And you'll get into all sorts of difficulties. If you don't look sharp you'll find yourself the central figure in a big breach of promise suit. And she'll get big damages. Serve you right, you old fool!" And then she was gone, leaving Lambert assassinating several rare shrubs with his cane.

CHAPTER VIII

MARRIAGE MADE EASY

ALONE in the Italian Garden were Mrs. D'Aquila and Captain Greville Sartoris. There was a certain kinship of spirit between the two. Sartoris was cool and incisive—so was the woman. Sartoris had not hesitated at much to gain his small sporting ends,—neither would she. He was now on the point of anything criminal that would advance his pocketbook,—so would she be. Added to this they had known each other intimately in London in a certain society in which Mrs. D'Aquila was now at home, and which Sartoris sought occasionally.

As the Captain and Mrs. D'Aquila stood talking in the starlight, they were interrupted by the arrival of Sir Andrew Beck,

Brancaster's surgeon, who was on his way to the house to see his patient.

"Ah, Sir Andrew!" Mrs. D'Aquila greeted the doctor. "I hoped to see you before I left. I am so anxious about dear Hubert—er—Lord Brancaster."

"We must all be, Mrs. D'Aquila," the surgeon replied gravely, as he looked at the woman somewhat curiously.

"He's worse?" she asked quickly.

"He could not be, madam."

"You are alarmed then?"

"I am hopeful, equally. He has been insensible for six days. I fear at any moment he may collapse. I hope at any moment he may regain consciousness—for when he does, his recovery should be rapid."

"Should be?" she pressed Sir Andrew.

"Nothing is certain," he explained. "Brain injury leaves dangerous, and sometimes very curious, after effects. Prob-

ably he will never remember anything about his accident—even getting into his car—"

"Deuced strange, isn't it?" Captain Sartoris put in.

"Yes," Sir Andrew replied. "A blow on the brain knocks a bit out of memory."

"For long?" Mrs. D'Aquila inquired suddenly.

"Forever," he answered briefly.

"Yes, I saw that once," Sartoris interrupted. "You know Peter Crocker? One of the best over a country—went down to Cheltenham and rode two winners the first day. On the second he rode Halifax for Lord Melrose in the big Steeplechase—came a frightful purler at the water jump and was insensible for a week. When he recovered, he never remembered his two winners, as a fact never remembered being at Cheltenham at all—and never remembered any of his bets!"

Sir Andrew Beck smiled, as he remarked dryly—

"That might have been convenient."

"Yes," he said, "but he had to pay all the same."

"Fancy paying for what you can't remember doing!" Mrs. D'Aquila cried, aghast at such a financial calamity.

"That might easily be Lord Brancaster's case," Sir Andrew continued. "He has had a bad bout. His life has not been too regular—too healthy."

"You mean, Sir Andrew, that in any case there is grave danger?" Mrs. D'Aquila asked.

"I say there may be, Mrs. D'Aquila. It is not proper that I should disguise it from anyone to whom—er—to whom—"

Mrs. D'Aquila did not wait for him to finish.

"His life is very dear to me," she said.

"I have always asked you to tell me the truth, Sir Andrew."

Sir Andrew looked at her with seriousness as he replied—

"And I am sure you won't abuse it by any undue display of anxiety should you be present when consciousness returns—it will be essential to his recovery that his surroundings should be peaceful, restful, happy."

"I hope my presence will never mean anything else," she affirmed, with some trace of resentment.

"Quite so," and Sir Andrew drew out his watch. "And now if you'll excuse me, it's time I had a look at my patient and dressed for dinner. Wonderful what an appetite your North Country air gives to one. We will hope there will be better news to-morrow. Good evening." And he walked slowly on in the direction of the house.

And now Mrs. D'Aquila sat thinking over his words, as she had just come from the chamber of Brancaster, while Sartoris, equally thoughtful, smoked his strong and perpetual cigarettes at her side. Finally the woman raised her eyes, broodingly, to his thoughtful face, as they sat together on a stone bench.

"Greville," she said somberly, "I have lost my chance."

He started.

"Eh, Nora, what's that?" he asked.

"I have lost my chance—of becoming—a first-class widow," she said in deadly, calm tones.

"Whose?"

"Brancaster's."

"Rats."

"Fact."

"He'd really have married you?"

"He would."

"Rubbish—I beg your pardon."

"Certainly," went on the woman. "You don't understand Brancaster. He's a 'pre' something or other. That's where I come in. I'm long and I'm lank—he calls it æsthetic. I dye my hair puce—he calls it Titian and Burne-Jones. I can pant and whisper at the piano under a pink lamp shade, with the soft pedals down, while I look unutterable yearnings into space. I can babble second-hand philosophy—French philosophy—in the moonlight. He draws and he paints and, like most men, he is romantic; like most noblemen, he is chivalrous; like most gentlemen, he is generous. He thinks I have been misunderstood and harshly judged. I'm certain that if some day I got him in the right mood, in tears and a teagown, with my hair down and a laudanum bottle on the mantelpiece, you know—why, one day it was as near as this."

To the amazement of the Captain she took

from her handbag and gave to him a special license to marry, dated but a month before.

Sartoris set bolt upright on the bench they were jointly occupying.

"Why didn't you?" he shot out.

"Some rot about me in the papers—er—" She made a vague gesture.

"There's more in about you this morning," he said. "You've made divorces rather a hobby, haven't you?"

But she ignored his last words.

"I could have talked him out of it," she went on. "Now there'll never be another chance. It's awfully rough luck. I might be a widow, Lady Brancaster, if anything happened to-night. Funny situation if I'd married him last week, and he recovered, and then as Sir Andrew said, couldn't remember anything he had done."

There was a period of silence between them, while both stared straight ahead.

An idea seemed to be in the air. Neither afterward knew just which of them had thought of it first. But after a moment they turned with a common impulse to stare understandingly at each other.

"This," said Sartoris, tapping the paper, "this would remind him. I wonder if he will recover."

Mrs. D'Aquila shook her head.

"I am afraid—" she began.

"If he didn't, there would be no one to question anything he'd done—or was said to have done," the Captain interrupted.

"*Said* to have done?"

"Yes. You're quite sure he didn't marry you?" Sartoris asked his companion, looking at her intently.

"Of course!"

"It seems such a pity," he continued—"with no one left to question it . . . You hard up?"

"Very!" was the emphatic reply.

"So am I," agreed Greville Sartoris, with something resembling a sigh.

"I'd a notion the heiress—" Mrs. D'Aquila began, nodding toward the house.

"Tried," Sartoris finished, for her. "No go. And my cousin Beverley won't lend any more, and I'm in a tight corner—shockingly tight corner." It was usually a difficult matter to read the Captain's face, but on this occasion, having made this exceedingly personal revelation, he was at no pains to conceal the care that momentarily aged his handsome features. His statement was too true.

"Suppose—" he said in that sinister fashion he had at times.

"I wouldn't dare—" she countered.

Then their eyes met and clung together in a glance of the deepest understanding.

"I'm devilishly hard up," he said.

"So am I," she returned.

Sartoris swallowed hard, then when he began to speak the thought that was vaguely in both their minds, his first words were tremulous, but as he went on his tones became cold, decidedly emotionless.

"Suppose to-night you drive up in your motor—to a village church—and the date in the register and on the certificate were put back ten days and the names came out as yours and Brancaster's?" he asked.

In her excitement, now that their hitherto unspoken mutual thought was out, she rose to her feet.

"Impossible," she exclaimed. "The risk!"

"What risk? A bare chance of recovery—and none of memory. You heard Sir Andrew. He'll never be able to deny that he'd married you, since he wouldn't be able to remember anything that had happened during this period. And when he'd for-

gotten, the special license and the marriage certificate would remind him. Where's your pluck?"

In her turn, the woman clenched her fists and swallowed a lump in her throat.

"Where's your parson?" she asked.

He smiled pleasantly at the prospect.

"How much?" she asked in a hard voice, thinking of the only motive that could impel him.

With a shrug of his shoulders Sartoris returned:

"We needn't bargain. I'll see to my share."

"Where's your parson?" she asked again.

As if in answer to her urgent request for a spiritual adviser, the Rev. Verner Haslam passed along the terrace on his return to the vicarage. With a contemptuous gesture Sartoris indicated the man.

"There he is," said he—then with a quick stride he passed before the clergyman and

stood directly in his path, while the woman sank down on the bench again, covering for the moment her face with her hands.

"Well, Haslam," said Sartoris, leering into the other's face, "what are you doing here?"

Haslam made a motion toward Falconhurst.

"I—" he began.

"I know what you are doing at Falconhurst," went on Sartoris. "But I mean in the village?"

"I am taking the vicar's duty," he said, as his head sank beneath the other's contempt.

"Has the vicar any idea who you are?" came brutally from the Captain. "Does he know you are a drunkard and were deprived of your living?"

For one brief moment Haslam raised his shamed head.

"My bishop knows—that I have striven

to conquer an evil habit—that all but ruined me. He knows that I am striving to win back—"

"And what else does he know?" broke in Sartoris. "You have several other little habits that aren't a credit to your cloth. There was a card scandal when we were in Paris."

"I beg, I entreat you—if that were known— May not a man repent sincerely of everything?"

"By all means go ahead—but you'll find that that is rather a large order. Tell—me—any marriages in your church lately?"

"None—for three weeks," said Haslam, glad that his tormentor seemed turning from his immediate object.

In a seemingly happy humor Sartoris slapped the man of the robe on his back.

"Capital," he ejaculated. "No dates in the register for three weeks! Now, if a marriage took place and somehow—owing

to your habits—names got a bit muddled and dates a bit set back—couldn't you include it in your list of—er—regrettable reminiscences?"

"Include—" stammered Haslam.

"That," said Sartoris forcefully, handing to him the license to marry.

"Brancaster," gasped the curate. "Brancaster, whom I've just left—"

"Dying probably," went on Sartoris, "leaving undone what he meant to do—leaving a great wrong to a woman." There now came into the voice of Sartoris a great irony. While he seemed to be framing a plausible argument to Haslam, still his tone implied that he himself understood how specious it all was, and his irony was directed not alone at himself but at Haslam, Mrs. D'Aquila and, indeed, the whole world in general. "I'm not a knight Paladin, but I want to put it right. In the sudden extremity there is only one way. There

will be no one to question—most people think it's done already—but because it isn't is the woman to be left in—er—shame? I'll save her"—again the irony in spite of himself—"if you'll help me. Can't I appeal to your better self?"

"It's fraud, it's crime," Haslam said, his whole figure seeming united in a strange trembling.

This time Sartoris openly sneered as he went on with his appeal "to your better nature," for he was sure of this weakling.

"No — justice — mercy — pity! You've asked me for pity and mercy. What is your answer when I ask them from you?"

"Heaven forgive me," came from Haslam.

In reply Sartoris drawled out:

"Strange way of putting it."

The weakling again hesitated as he thought of the consequences of exposure if exposure came from Sartoris. He loved to

minister to the wealthy and nobly born. And, failing that, he would be submerged.

"If—if I were sure—" he faltered.

Sartoris slapped him on the back.

"You have my assurance. You have heard my request. I've heard yours. What do we both answer?" Sartoris asked.

Haslam looked at him. But he did not dare to trust to words. He bowed assent slowly.

"I'll send you a note," concluded Sartoris. "It will be to-night. Be ready."

Again Haslam bowed. Then he left them.

Instantly Mrs. D'Aquila came toward Sartoris as he lighted a new cigarette.

"What have you said? What have you done?" she asked in the deepest agitation.

There was extreme confidence in the smile of Sartoris, a confidence so great that it spread to her, as he replied:

"Saved you, dear Lady Brancaster—if

you've got the pluck to face it—once more you'll be a legally wedded wife. The harmless necessary parson has been found."

"But the bridegroom?"

He bowed so deeply that she could see the whole line of the parting of his hair.

"For this occasion only—that's where I come in," he said flippantly.

CHAPTER IX

A WOMAN SCORNED

LORD BRANCASTER, now well on the road to recovery, lay in a large seat in the loggia of Falconhurst, looking almost tenderly at Lady Diana, who had come to him with her basket of daffodils, in her self-imposed task of putting flowers in all of the old carved stone vases about the great house.

Brancaster thanked her for her kindness.

"Oh, that's all right. I thought perhaps you were asleep," Lady Diana said, smiling as she looked around at him.

"And dreaming, eh? No; only day-dreams. I was thinking . . ."

"Of what?" she asked, idly, as she busied herself with her basket.

"Of what a beautiful world it is . . . of how good it is to be alive on a day like this

. . . of how splendid it is to be getting well again." And Brancaster looked out across the great lawn, and up at the blue morning sky, and drew a deep breath of content.

"Yes, you've made a wonderful recovery. A fortnight ago. . ." Lady Diana stopped rather painfully.

"They didn't think I'd pull through, eh?"

"No. Sir Andrew Beck says that you've been as near death as a man could be without actually dying."

"And now I've been won back from the gates of death—thanks to you."

Lady Diana glanced up quickly as she caught the emphasis Brancaster gave the final word.

"I wasn't your only nurse," she reminded him.

"But you were *the* one. It was your touch that brought peace and your presence

that brought sunshine; it was you who called me back to life and made me want to live again."

"I—I am glad to think that," she faltered.

"You may be—it's your work. And now I'm nearly well again—so well, that I feel like a fraud for continuing to play the invalid—so well, that I ought—to go away."

"Why? You know you're very welcome here," Lady Diana told him, ignoring, as women will, the intense quality that marked the young man's voice.

"I know you've made me so," he answered, gratefully.

"Grandfather and I? Why not? Of course we should do that. And—oh!—here's your sketch book," she finished, somewhat lamely, with an apparent effort to divert the conversation into other channels.

"So it is! But—how did you get it into your hands?" Brancaster asked, taking the book from her.

"Well, you had it with you in the car."

"Had I?" he exclaimed, turning the flat volume over and examining it curiously.

"Of course you had," she replied, with quite a shade of wonder at the question.

He opened the book and turned its pages.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?" she asked.

"These studies of hounds—they look like my work, but I can't recall making them. And here's one I'll swear I never did."

Lady Diana looked over his shoulder.

"Dido?" she said. "No, I did that. Don't you remember?"

Brancaster put his hand to his head in dazed fashion.

"No," he said.

"You'd been sketching near the kennels,"

she continued. "We first met there, don't you remember?"

"I can't remember a thing about it!" exclaimed Brancaster, his head in a whirl as he found that all that had happened immediately prior to his accident had vanished from his memory.

"Sir Andrew said that for some time your memory would be confused," the girl said.

"It's hard not to recall the best mornings of one's life," said the young Earl. "I wish the accident had blotted out the worst, so that you could never hear of them."

"I do not believe all I have heard," said the girl.

"Tell me what you've heard and I'll say if it's true."

"I've heard you gamble," said the girl, in whom there was a strong moral sense.

"At times," he confessed, "when life seems very meaningless."

"That you are extravagant—"

"What's money for?" he asked lightly, shrugging his shoulders.

"Not to be wasted—squandered—till you are embarrassed—I beg your pardon—" And she stopped short, realizing that she had no right to say such words.

"Till I'm nearly broke," said Brancaster, —"quite right—and nothing to show for it. I shall be a beggar some day—die in the gutter—and serve me right."

She shook her head.

"That's not worthy! If you see you were wrong there's time to go right. And you should go. If you've been stupid, I am sure there was some excuse." She looked at him kindly, and there was in her heart the earnest desire to help this new found friend.

"Only the old one—a young fool should not be his own master. My mother died when I was born—my father, when I was

a child. I was a minor with too much money and I went the pace—downhill—all the time—with every hand to help me." Brancaster's voice was a bit sad and a melancholy expression played about his mobile mouth.

"Ah!—if there had only been a sister's hand!" And Lady Diana looked at him wistfully.

"Yes, but no good woman ever came into my life till I met you. Your hand has given me new life."

"You make too much of it," she said simply, turning aside for a moment to hide the embarrassment she could not but feel.

"The giver or the gift?" he asked. "I've made little enough of life, so far!"

"Couldn't you in the future?" Her voice carried with it a gentleness that was almost a caress.

"Is—that your wish?" For a man who had but lately been at death's door, Lord

Brancaster showed surprising animation.

"Indeed—from my heart," she told him.

His face lighted suddenly and he said:

"Then the past does not make you utterly despise me?"

"Of course not. It only makes me—sad. Very—very sorry."

"For me or my folly?" and he looked at her with a gratitude that was unquestionable.

"Both. It all seems such a pity!"

"Could your pity ever be akin to—"

"To hope? It is that now."

The fearless gaze of the "cleanest sportswoman in all England," inspired Brancaster. Hurriedly and hopefully, yet fearfully, he went on:

"And if hope were justified—if you saw that a man could shake off the past—retrieve—repair—hold up his head and come to you with clean hands and a clean heart—would you let him say to you—"

The sudden entrance of a servant put an end to what was in his heart and mind.

"Mrs. D'Aquila," announced the menial.

Brancaster shrugged angry shoulders.

"You'd rather be alone," suggested Lady Diana.

"Yes—and I shall be in a few moments," answered Brancaster.

"I'll come to you when you are," said Lady Diana, and was gone.

A moment later Mrs. D'Aquila was advancing toward him with outstretched hands.

"Ah, dear Hubert," she exclaimed, and then stopped short as she saw that he took almost involuntarily a few backward steps from her. "What is the matter, Hubert?"

"Nothing," returned Brancaster. "Won't you sit down?"

She obeyed his hand gesture, and sat down.

"Well, now," she continued, "tell me how you are."

His manner was cold as he replied,

"Practically quite well again—at least I shall soon be—Sir Andrew has gone."

While his manner was cold and the woman must have seen plainly that he wished to break with her there was no consciousness of such knowledge in her voice and manner as she exclaimed:

"Poor darling! I'm so glad. Doctors are sweet persons, but a hateful nuisance."

"I owe my life to them—and er—to my nurses," he said warmly.

"Dear things," she said, "but I should have nursed you better. You don't know what misery it was to think of you lying there between life and death among strangers."

"They cared for me like the best of friends," said Brancaster warmly.

"Quite sweet of them!" went on the

woman. "But it was I who should have been with you—it was my right, my duty, given me by our love. What should I have done if anything had happened—if I had been left alone?"

She touched his shoulder with the lightest of pressure, yet it was exceedingly repugnant to him and he squirmed in his seat, finally arising.

"Nonsense! You've plenty of friends, Nora," he exclaimed, annoyed.

"Friends?" she responded in a peculiar inflection.

"Yes," he went on hurriedly, but still firmly. "You always had before we met, and will again after—" Even he could not yet finish the sentence.

"After—what?" she asked, leaning far over toward him.

Brancaster took a deep breath and nerved himself.

"After you've forgotten my existence," he

said. "Friends who'll amuse you for the day, entertain you, invite you here and there, for this race week, or that season, as I did."

"Did?" she asked, repeating the past tense meaningly.

"Yes," went on Brancaster, affecting not to notice. "When you were tired with town and wanted rest and quiet in the country."

The woman's voice now became low, intense, and full of a sinister threat.

"Was that quite the spirit of your invitations, your letters—your protestations?" she asked quietly.

Brancaster shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, well—surely—no midsummer madness is expected to live through an autumn," he said firmly.

The woman was now on her feet and quite close to him while her eyes fairly blazed into his.

"What are you trying to tell me, Hubert?" she demanded.

"That—that when a man has been as near to death as I have," he continued, "he learns to look at life differently—more clearly—and—"

She broke in with:

"Stuff! 'When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be!' You've a fit of the dismals—and I don't wonder—after a month of prunes and prisms in a place like this! Come back to the Rievers—we'll ask some cheery people down to stay—you'll be yourself again."

"I am not coming back to the Rievers," he said shortly.

"Eh? Well, it is gloomy. Much jollier to meet again in town."

"No," he said.

"Then where?"

"Nowhere," he replied. "We can't meet again at all."

"Can't? Why?" she asked, ready for the clash.

"All that's over, Nora," he said. "I'm sorry, but it's best to say it out. I've determined between us this to-day is 'good-by.'"

"Do you forget that you asked me to be your wife?" she said.

"That was before—" he began and paused.

"Before a pack of lies were published in the papers," she finished for him; "innuendoes—suspicions that I was never called to answer—that were only half believed because—because—you know how defenseless a woman is—nothing was proved! Did I ever deceive you about myself? I told you everything—"

"Everything?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry," he said, "but I do not remember—the statements I read about you

last week, you did not explain. I remember no explanation from you."

"You do not remember many things that happened before your accident—as Sir Andrew said," she replied.

"Some trifles—certainly," he responded.

"Trifles!" she exclaimed. "You forget that you confirmed your promise to me. Hubert, whatever the world says of me, thinks of me, you were different. I told you all. You knew—and understood. Shan't we walk down the old paths together again? Won't you lead me to the new life, the hope you promised?"

"Nora, forgive me," said Brancaster, in deep agitation, "but whatever I promised I did not then know—"

But the woman interrupted savagely:

"That you'd meet Di Sartoris, a chit of a girl simpering over a sick man, and fall in love with her!"

"That has nothing to do with it—" he

said, resentful that Lady Diana's name had been brought into their conversation.

"It was everything," she asserted.

"Very well, then, have it your own way," he said. "If I've been a fool—I'll stop in time. There's the truth—and that is—good-by."

To the relief of Brancaster a servant entered and gave him a note which he saw at once had been written by Beverley.

"I was to ask your lordship, to read it at once," the servant said and withdrew.

With a muttered apology Brancaster tore open the envelope, and then, having partially read the note, looked keenly at Mrs. D'Aquila.

"About me?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered.

"Pray read it," she said with a shrug of indifference.

Brancaster read aloud:

"I do not wish to seem personally discourteous to your guest, and I am very sen-

sible of the consideration due to the feelings of a woman, but I trust her visit to-day will be a short one, and I must ask you to let her understand, with as little offense as may be, that now you are recovered, her visits here must cease. I hoped her own common sense would have prompted her not to call again, but since she has you must make it clear that I cannot receive a lady whose exact position and relation to yourself I cannot explain to my granddaughter Di."

The woman stopped him with a furious gesture.

"Thanks," she said savagely. "So it's once more again Di? I am to be humiliated for Di! Insulted for—Di! Thrown over by you—turned out by him—for—Di! Very well! Tell him what I tell you, that when next we meet I trust I shall be able to explain correctly the precise nature of my position and relation—to—him—and to you —and to—Di!"

CHAPTER X

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

THERE was only laughter and jovial clinking of glasses as Beverley entertained the hunt at breakfast in the great hall of Falconhurst, while outside the hounds were being prepared for a big meet. The men in their red coats seemed so many figures stepped out of the frames of the portraits on the walls behind them.

But at one end of the table a little withdrawn from their neighbors the Rev. Verner Haslam and Captain Sartoris were talking. The clergyman looked anxiously up and down the board.

"Where's Brancaster?" he asked, his uneasy conscience troubling him.

But Sartoris was perfectly at his ease and the other's anxious tones passed by him.

"Oh, he's driven down to the station," he

returned in a casual tone. "He's been fussing all the morning about a parcel or something he wanted from town."

"He's quite recovered?" asked Haslam.

"They think so. Talks of hunting today," said Sartoris.

"But his mind—his memory?" the uneasy clergyman asked.

Sartoris shrugged his shoulders in their well-fitting red coat.

"Why?" he asked.

"When the vicar returns he'll read that—that entry in the marriage register," he said, glancing uneasily up the table.

"Brancaster's marriage," returned the other. "Well—didn't he marry?"

"You know—" began Haslam.

"Pardon me. I know nothing."

"You signed for him," persisted Haslam.

"No. You wrote his name."

"But the work. The cross against it—"

Sartoris was visibly annoyed.

"Brancaster's wrist was injured at the time," he said. "Dash it! We must be artistic—he couldn't write."

"What does it matter? The thing is there," groaned the substitute vicar.

"Quite so—in perfectly legal form," said Sartoris firmly.

"He will know it's false," said the conscience-stricken Haslam.

"Never! He never can or will—unless you tell him," said the Captain. "Do you want to add a memory of jail to your other reminiscences? Beastly place! My dear fellow, for once in our lives we've done a good action. Don't be afraid of it. We've bought justice for a woman. She'll stick to it. I shall stick to it. You stick to it. You can't be found out—so be noble. You'll have a jolly bad time if you don't."

The other shuddered.

"But will she make her claim—publicly—soon?" he asked.

Sartoris took a puff at the cigarette between his lips as he returned:

"Can't say. She never meant to while he lived. She was anticipating—er—weeds, don't you see? Now the situation's changed. If he jilts her she may be jealous—perhaps resentful—and well, if the crash comes sooner or later—it's all one to you, my dear Haslam—d'you see? You've got to stick to it."

Beverley now rapped on the table and gradually the company of men settled into their places.

"The season's over," said the Marquis, "and this is our last meet. Now those beastly violets are sprouting in the garden—our last meet and the last time I shall hunt the hounds. The Beverleys have hunted from Falconhurst for over two hundred years"—he paused to let the applause subside—"and so they will as long as a Beverley lives, a Beverley'll be their master. But Beverley

has no son to come after him. He died as a Beverley should for his country. He's not here to be my deputy. So, gentlemen, it lies with you to say who shall. You want young blood to hunt good hounds—I'll find them all right—but we want a deputy master—one you'll all follow—one the country knows—one who'll hunt the Beverley as a good sportsman should—and as you who sit around me are good sportsmen one and all, I've called you all together to leave the choice to you."

At this moment the young Earl of Brancaster entered and took his seat at the table of Beverley. Instantly there were shouts of "Brancaster" and Captain Raynor got to his feet quickly with:

"In the old days it was the rule when the master at Falconhurst came a cropper, it was the master of Rievers who hunted the hounds. It has been his turn to come croppers lately. But now, as we all rejoice to

see, he's fit and well again, and standing at Lord Beverley's right hand. Could a better man take the whip than Lord Brancaster?"

As amid cheers that followed this speech, Lady Diana and the women of the hunt in full field costume entered and grouped themselves on the stairs to hear the conclusion of the speeches, Brancaster arose and with a bow to the company began in a low voice which gradually increased in power:

"Gentlemen, you pay me a very high compliment, but I am afraid I don't deserve it. To command the support of the Beverley Hunt, I have not yet proved that I can ride hard enough or as straight as I shall when I follow the lead that I am certain will appeal most nearly to you—the lead you would follow to the hardest finish in the world—the lead, not of a deputy master, for there is none here fitted to take that place—but the lead that is given in some counties

by the Mistress of the Hounds. Gentlemen, let us follow that example and declare by acclamation to-day that Lady Diana Sartoris is the chosen Deputy Mistress of the Beverley Hounds."

Only the greatest positive and affirmative shouts greeted this declaration, and, encouraged by it, Brancaster walked slowly to the foot of the stairway, and took from his pocket a jewel case containing a miniature whip in diamonds, the package he had been fuming about in the morning.

"Lady Diana," he said to the young girl above him, "you have heard the decision of the hunt. May I beg that on their behalf you will accept—the whip?"

And he gave to Lady Diana the glittering diamond whip.

Lady Diana was plainly moved, and there seemed tears of pride and joy in her eyes as she answered:

"Gentlemen—I—I—if you really wish it

—then as long as you wish it—I will do my best to hunt as hard and ride as straight as a Sartoris should—I thank you very much —and I'll hold the whip you give me till it —it can go into better hands."

Overjoyed at the turn of events the old Marquis hastened to the table, filled a big bumper and then motioned to all the company to do the same.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried, "the hounds wait! It's time for a stirrup cup! Fill your glasses! I give you a toast."

Cries of "the Whip" and "Lady Di" greeted him.

"Yes, the Whip and Lady Di," he said, "and not only the Whip and my dear Di—for the Whip may soon have a new handle to its name—"

A general murmur greeted this statement.

"Falconhurst and Rievers may be bound by a new thong," went on Beverley. "On a day like this it's a great pleasure to ask you

to drink not only to your new Whip—to my grandchild Di—but to the future—"

The strident tones of a big footman at the door interrupted him, or rather inserted themselves into the pause he had intended to be impressive.

The footman's word completed the Marquis's sentence, but they also gave a sinister threat, a tragic turn to the happy course of events.

"Lady Brancaster," announced the footman, while all turned their eyes to the doorway to behold Mrs. D'Aquila smiling coldly.

CHAPTER XI

A POOR DESSERT

FOR a moment there was a general silence after half the company had got to its feet. Haslam moved toward Sartoris as if he required the assisting strength of his personality. Beverley turned toward the woman standing there coolly self-possessed.

"Madam!" he exclaimed.

In a most decided drawing-room manner Mrs. D'Aquila faced him.

"Lord Beverley, pray forgive this—er—intrusion," she said sweetly. "Certain rumors having reached my ears, I had come to ask for a private talk, with a view to obviating a public scandal. But, happily—or unhappily—I have just heard the words that have fallen from your lips. Therefore, though I regret the pain that I may cause,

it is due to myself that I should speak here as publicly as you have spoken, and say—that I am Lord Brancaster's wife."

Brancaster started forward, his hand at his forehead as he struggled to regain memory of the last days before his accident.

"Wife?" he almost shouted. "It's a lie!"

Lady Diana had gone straight to her grandfather and, ready to fly to the refuge of his arms, stood close to him.

"Madam," said Beverley in deep pain, "if this is some ill-timed piece of bravado—some attempt—"

But Mrs. D'Aquila took the words from his mouth.

"It was an attempt to save your granddaughter humiliation," she said, "Lord Beverley; perhaps something worse. It is now an endeavor to assist you in explaining to her exactly my position in this house."

While Lady Diana's eyes followed Brancaster wistfully, despairingly, the young

Earl turned to the company of his friends and neighbors.

"Gentlemen, on my honor—" he exploded, "Beverley, this is an outrage! Turn this woman out."

Beverley seemed half inclined to take the hot-headed suggestion of his neighbor and act upon it.

"Mrs. D'Aquila,—" he began.

"That is not my name," she said firmly. "You don't believe it?"

"I believe Brancaster," said the racing Marquis, clasping the hand of the younger man.

Suddenly the woman held out to him a paper.

"Then read that," she ordered.

Beverley, without taking the document into his own hand, looked at it as though it were a thing which might scorch him. It was plainly a marriage certificate.

"Great Heavens!" he exclaimed.

But Brancaster had been looking over his shoulder.

"It's forged—it's false. You know it," he almost shouted into the face of the smiling woman.

Lord Beverley gave another long look at the document and read there the signature of the Rev. Verner Haslam. He walked slowly toward the clergyman, but not before Sartoris had whispered to him savagely:

"Stick to it."

Lord Beverley now had the paper in his own hands and he passed it to Haslam.

"Mr. Haslam, is this true?" he asked.

But Verner Haslam did not look at the document. Speaking with the greatest possible effort he slightly bowed, as he answered in a low tone:

"That is my signature, Lord Beverley."

His manifest difficulty in speaking only strengthened his assertion, as all present thought that the clergyman hesitated merely

because he found a very unpleasant duty before him.

But Haslam was not to escape without telling a real falsehood.

"It can't be, Beverley—Di—I swear," began Brancaster and stopped.

But Beverley paid no further attention to the pale young girl. To the clergyman he turned, asking:

"And it's true that you married them—that they are man and wife?"

Again Haslam bowed, and then as he felt the cold menacing eyes of Sartoris on him he managed to add a hoarse:

"Yes."

With a half sob and a scream, Lady Diana flung herself into the arms of Lord Beverley. The old man gathered her closely to himself, and then glowered upon the smiling Mrs. D'Aquila and the stricken Brancaster equally.

"You hound," he said sternly to Brancas-

ter, "you, knowing this, come here and would have— Out of my sight, both of you— Turn this woman and this blackguard out of my house!"

CHAPTER XII

BRANCASTER PLUNGES AGAIN

THREE weeks after the hunt breakfast at Falconhurst had ended so disastrously for Brancaster and Lady Diana, Sartoris and Mrs. D'Aquila met in a corridor of the stables at the London horse show.

Sartoris had been making secret signals to the woman as she sat in a box with a party of her Bohemian friends.

"Ah, at last!" he exclaimed in relief, hurrying to meet her as she came down the corridor.

Mrs. D'Aquila glanced to the right and to the left as she walked swiftly along. Her name and face were in every newspaper in the United Kingdom because of the great D'Aquila-Brancaster case, begun when she started her suit to prove her marriage.

"I could not get away from my friends before," she said anxiously, "but I ought not to meet you all—"

"I am not sure that I ought," returned Sartoris far from feeling at ease himself, "with a chance of Beverley's seeing us, but it is so important, and surely for a moment, in public—"

"Nowhere," said the woman, decisively.

"Why?"

"Because Brancaster fights to a finish to prove that I am not his wife—his lawyers follow the wildest clews—sift the smallest suspicion. He has me followed by detectives everywhere—dogged—says openly—I've heard it—if I win my case and prove the marriage he'll divorce me on the first chance."

"Another divorce!" exclaimed Captain Sartoris, in good-natured satire.

"But he shan't!" she said, setting her teeth together.

"Quite so," he returned. "Heroine of the greatest society scandal of the century. Wife or no wife? Columns in the daily press, pictures in the weekly. Fabulous offers from the music hall syndicates!"

"And every shilling I possess going to the lawyers," she lamented. "But I'll spend every shilling, raise every shilling, pawn my last diamond—and then I'll starve until they own me Lady Brancaster."

"I know you'd like it," he sighed. "I wish you were Lady Brancaster in all truth."

"What do you want?" she asked shortly.

"What you owe me for the title," he said.

"Money?"

"My name is on a bill that I must meet to-morrow for three thousand. I want a bit of ready money for interest—then with time, and the chance of a lucky win— If I could know to-night—I daren't let you go to my rooms or go myself to yours. Isn't there some good, safe, neutral spot, where

no one in the world ever goes, in a crowd?"

She reflected a moment.

"I have it," she exclaimed, "no one who knows us ever goes there. It's Tussaud's, the wax works. Be there at ten sharp. It closes early."

With a word of appreciation for her sharp and nimble wit Sartoris left her, their engagement made for that night.

Sartoris had scarcely vanished around an angle of the corridor, when who should suddenly confront Mrs. D'Aquila but Lady Diana, her grandfather and Mrs. Beamish, who appeared upon the scene from the opposite direction to that in which Sartoris had opportunely made his escape.

Mrs. D'Aquila met the newcomers coolly. She strolled past them and deliberately looked them up and down, without so much as a word or a nod of recognition. Then with her head held high, she swept slowly and insolently away.

Lord Beverley stood still, with compressed lips.

"I always disliked that woman!" Mrs. Beamish sputtered, unable to control her feelings.

"I wonder how she dare show her face!" Lady Diana said, red with embarrassment.

"My dear, it's a public place. She's a right to be here," her grandfather remonstrated.

"Calling herself Lady Brancaster!" And the suspicion of a tear trembled on one of her lovely eyelashes.

"I know what I should like to call her!" Mrs. Beamish exclaimed spitefully. "The hussy!"

"The law will tell us what to call her—and other people, in time, Betty—we need not discuss it till then," Beverley said quietly. And then, to change the subject—

"Where's your hack, Di?" he asked.

"Here, dear—" And Lady Diana turned

to one of the box-stalls from which a sleek head was thrust out, in appeal for a lump of sugar.

"And where's Lambert? He ought to be here, looking after the mare."

Mrs. Beamish sniffed quite audibly, as she said, half to herself—

"And he's somewhere else, looking after the fillies."

And at that moment Tom Lambert came bustling up to them.

"Well, Tom?" Lord Beverley greeted him, inquiringly.

"'Fraid it's no go, my lord. Mare went very short this mornin'. Had her leg under the cold douche for an hour but 'tis still very 'ot and puffy—feels like the ligament. 'Fraid we can't show her!"

Lady Diana patted the pretty creature.

"Poor darling!" she said, as the mare pressed her silky nose into her mistress' hand.

"Would you like the bandage off?" Lambert asked the Marquis.

"No, no! You know more about legs than I do. If you say she's lame, that settles it, Tom." Lord Beverley looked over the rail with disappointment, for he knew that his granddaughter's heart was set on the mare's winning.

"I am disappointed. I know we should have won," Lady Diana said sorrowfully.

"Looked like it, my lady, yesterday," Tom remarked. "But you can't be certain of nothing with 'osses."

Lady Diana smiled, for she knew that the trainer was trying in his clumsy way, to comfort her; and she lowered her voice as she inquired—

"Not of the Two Thousand, Tom?"

Lambert held up a warning finger, while Lord Beverley glanced round the corridor suspiciously.

"There's nothing certain in this world, my dear Di, except income tax and influenza," he warned his granddaughter.

At this juncture the big double doors leading to the arena opened briefly to allow a top-hatted gentleman and a steward to pass through.

"Eh? Oh! Clanmore!" Lord Beverley exclaimed pleasantly, as he recognized a friend.

"Wonder if I could ask you a favor?" the newcomer said.

"Should think so—if you tried hard," was Beverley's bantering answer.

"Well, for each of our competitions here there are three judges—one English, one American, and one Continental—"

"Verdict in Volapuk, or Esperanto?" the Marquis inquired, drily.

"There'll be none at all for the high jump —it's on now—if we can't get someone to do

deputy for our chap—got kicked on the knee and had to leave the arena. If you would only volunteer, everyone would be delighted —there'd be no delay and—" Lord Clanmore stopped, with a most appealing look at Lady Diana's grandfather.

Lord Beverley was quite willing.

"Certainly—with pleasure—it won't take long?" he asked.

"No time. Announce Lord Beverley at once," he said, turning to the steward. "Come along!" he finished, waving a hand at the Marquis.

"Di?" said Lord Beverley, in a low voice.

"Yes, dear."

"I thought just now I saw Brancaster." There was seriousness in her grandfather's manner.

"Yes?" And she looked up somewhat sadly.

"If you should meet, you will remember

that he is a stranger. Under no circumstances will you speak to him. Promise me—"

"I—I don't want to promise."

"Very well, but you know my wish—my very earnest wish, and you will remember it and respect it, dear, I feel sure." Lord Beverley showed more concern than was his habit, as he followed Clanmore to the arena door, and he stopped and looked back for a moment before he passed through into the tan bark enclosure.

Lady Diana strolled slowly along the corridor, examining the beautifully groomed occupants of the boxes, leaving her companion and the trainer standing in front of the mare's stall.

"So disappointing the mare can't compete! When did she injure herself, Lambert?" Mrs. Beamish asked with solicitude.

"When she forgot she was a 'orse and behaved like a donkey—when she lost her tem-

per, like the rest of her sex, an' made a fool of herself," the trainer answered, with more than a trace of irritation, for he still smarted from the lady's late insinuations in regard to Myrtle Anson.

Mrs. Beamish bridled under the unexpected attack.

"Men never make fools of themselves!" she retorted.

"No. Women make fools of 'em," Lambert said, scoring handily.

"And girls. So I've noticed." And she gloated triumphantly over the discomfited Lambert.

Meanwhile Lady Diana was surprised by an unexpected greeting—

"Hullo—Di—why aren't you riding?" It was Sartoris, suave and elegant in faultless city garb.

"Can't," she answered, giving him the hand he claimed. "Isn't it bad luck? The mare's lame."

"I'm awfully sorry. Some pals of mine came on purpose to see you."

"Who?" she asked him.

"Er—Linconshire people—you don't know them—I've just come from their box—the girl asked me to get your autograph—shove it in her book, and I'll take it back—kind of consolation, eh! here's a style."

"It's just like yours, Greville," Lady Diana remarked.

"What?"

"The book!" she replied, as she took it from him.

"Eh?"

"The little bits of blue paper," she explained, "let in like photographs."

"Er—yes—and taken out like 'em—if the page gets soiled, don't you see—or—the—er—collector wants to swap them with another lunatic." And the Captain laughed in his easy fashion.

"Do they really do that?" Lady Diana

asked him in astonishment, as she wrote her name in the book. She was not much given to the lesser frivolities of her sex.

"Rather!" the Captain answered. "Awfully keen bargainers some of 'em—knew a chap once who actually got three good bishops for quite an indifferent ballet girl."

Lady Diana laughed.

"Don't be ridiculous!" she said.

"I was never more serious in my life—believe me. Thanks so much. I'll take it now," he added, holding out a hand for the book.

Faint shouts and hoots from the arena now reached their ears, causing Lady Diana to approach the great doors, which opened momentarily, affording her a glimpse of the scene within. Then, turning, she saw a group of friends standing at some little distance up the corridor. They recognized her and beckoned.

Greville Sartoris, meanwhile, dallied in

front of one of the boxes, glancing covertly over his shoulder at his charming cousin. And then, as the girl moved away to join the knot of pleasure-seekers who had summoned her, the Captain opened the autograph book. He quickly slipped out the piece of paper on which Lady Diana had written her name, regarded it searchingly, triumphantly, for an instant, and then placed it in his pocket.

And then with a satisfied sigh Captain Sartoris strolled away, carrying with him in his waistcoat pocket a promissory note, made out in the most approved fashion, payable to Greville Sartoris, and signed at the bottom by that rich and well-known young sportswoman—his cousin, Diana Sartoris.

In the meantime, Mrs. Beamish and Lambert had been joined by a party of merry-makers from the Falconhurst estate, the mare's box-stall offering a convenient rendezvous for Lord Beverley's dependents.

"Why, bless me, what are you all doing?"

Mrs. Beamish exclaimed, as the country people, arrayed in holiday finery, surrounded her.

"Come up by the 'scursion, ma'm, just for a day's pleasure, with his lordship's leave, us and Mary the second 'ousemaid, George Walter, and the under gardener's brother-in-law who's 'ome from the sea—started at five this morning we did," answered Tomlin, one of the Beverley kennel-men.

"Pretty early!" said Mrs. Beamish.

"It was that. Fourteen in the carriage, and didn't arrive till eleven."

"Quite a pleasure trip. Where did you go?" she asked.

"Begun at the Zoo."

"What did you think of the animals?"

"All right for furriners, ma'm!" put in Bunting, the head whip, "but give me the foxes!"

"Then we went to the Tower," Tomlin continued.

"And 'Enery put his head on the block. Didn't you, 'Enery?" And Mrs. Bunting appealed proudly to her progeny, which clung tightly to her skirt.

"Yes," blurted 'Enery.

"The young 'un knows how to enjoy himself," Tomlin explained, complacently.

"Evidently," Mrs. Beamish smiled.

"And when we go to the Wax Works he's to see the Chamber of 'Orrors—I've always promised him—haven't I, 'Enery?" And 'Enery's mother patted the young scion on the crown of its hat.

"Yes. I want to see Dr. Crippen," 'Enery whined.

"Dear light-hearted pet," Mrs. Beamish laughed.

"But we thought we'd come here first—" Tomlin continued.

"Just to see the difference. Are the others here?" Mrs. Beamish asked.

Tomlin evidenced some discomfiture at this query.

"Well, ma'm, the gardener's brother-in-law had a little trouble in the Tube," he said, lamely.

"And a lot of whisky out of it?" Mrs. Beamish was relentless.

"Well, sailors are always that free—" Tomlin stammered.

"I hope he'll be—when the day's over," she said grimly. "Mind none of you get lost!"

"'Case we do, ma'm," Tomlin explained, with an air, "we've all fixed to meet at the Wax Works—nine o'clock and then to St. Pancras for the last train."

Mrs. Beamish could not forego a few words of warning for these rustics.

"Well, I hope you all catch it," she said, "and thoroughly enjoy yourself. And mind nobody picks your pockets," she cautioned.

"In London there are thieves everywhere."

"That's all right, ma'm. We're Yorkshire," Tomlin assured her, confident of his own ability to take care of the entire party, if it were necessary.

"Good show, Tom?" he asked the trainer.

"Might be—if they chucked in a clown and a tight rope. I like 'osses in their places—in the stable or on the grass," Lambert grumbled. He had not recovered from the sting of Mrs. Beamish's biting sarcasm.

"Same 'ere. Wish you could get off for an hour with us."

"I'd like to. See if I can't pick you up later—p'raps at the Wax Works. I want to see them—particular."

At this point young Henry sent up a sudden and tremendous wail.

"Mother—I want some milk—I want a glass of milk!" he howled.

This sudden demand of nature reminded

them all that the inner man would not be indefinitely denied. And Bunting wiped his mouth with anticipation as he said—

"Quite right, my son, we all do! Give us your 'and and I'll lead you to it."

And the joyful party hurried away to find a refreshment stand, leaving Mrs. Beamish and Lambert unceremoniously behind.

"What on earth does a man at your time of life want with wax works?" that lady asked scornfully.

"Nothing wrong with 'em, is there?"

"If there isn't, you're the man to corrupt them," and Mrs. Beamish spoke with great conviction.

"Now—Mrs. B.," Tom began.

"Mish!" the uncompromising female stipulated.

Lambert look at her apprehensively. He knew that there were times when women, like horses, must be humored.

"Well—Beamish—then, if you will 'ave

it," he conceded. "You needn't be so hard on a chap. When we 'aven't had a pleasant little talk so to say for nigh on six weeks."

"It's not my fault that it isn't longer," she told him.

"Not since that even' in the Eyetalian Garden at Falconhurst."

"Where the Myrtles come from—and go to." Tom had made a fatal mistake in recalling that particular spot to Mrs. Beamish's mind.

"Still 'arping on that!" he groaned.

"I am!"

"Mrs. B.—" he implored.

"*Mish,* if you please—" and the unyielding woman fixed him with a hostile eye.

"Beamish, then. There ain't no more between me and Myrtle than there is between me and the moon."

"Moonshine! Tom Lambert, you'll never make me believe that if you talk till

you're black in the face instead of red."

Mrs. Beamish knew that the trainer's ruddy color was a source of anxiety to the man.

"Very well, Mrs. B—mish—in that case I'll go and 'ave a glass of milk—as it is said to be good for the complexion."

"Ha! Drink!" There was a world of conviction in the lady's tone.

"Yes, drink, and it's you as 'ave drove me to it—so now you know." And Tom turned away in a rage, just as Lady Diana came back to join her companion.

"What's the matter, Betty?" she laughed, perceiving Lambert's annoyance.

"Lambert!" was the laconic answer. "In his second childhood—talking of going to wax works!" And Mrs. Beamish was too disgusted to see any humor in the situation.

"Well, but they all do! Even Harry Anson and Myrtle—" Lady Diana could not conceal her amusement.

"What! Is she in town?" Mrs. Beamish was startled.

"Oh, yes. They came up with the others and she came to see my maid Saker, you know, and she told her she's going to meet them all there."

"I've no doubt!" said Mrs. Beamish, and her lips tightened. "And so'm I!" she finished firmly.

Then the doors of the arena opened to allow several people to pass out—among them two old friends of the Beverley household—a Mrs. Pelham and Capt. Rayner.

"Ah! Mrs. Beamish—mornin'—what d'you think of the show, eh?" Capt. Rayner asked Lady Diana's companion.

"Splendid! Compromise between a flower show and a circus. It only wants a young person with tarlatan skirts and tissue paper hoops."

It was plain that Mrs. Beamish was not enjoying herself particularly.

"Chance for you, Mrs. Beamish!" the Captain told her with amusement.

"Thanks. I'll leave the bare-back act to society beauties."

"Betty's in a bad temper," laughed Lady Diana.

"Doesn't she like the ring?" Mrs. Pelham inquired.

"No. I think it's even dull," Mrs. Beamish answered. "You performing?" she asked Rayner.

"My team is—four bays," the Captain answered with pride in his voice.

Mrs. Beamish consulted her list.

"I see 'em—with no names," she said. "I'll christen 'em for you. What are they like?"

"Two of 'em ripping! Full of form—" the Captain began, bubbling over with enthusiasm.

"Ah! Pegwell Bay and Herne Bay!"

"One's a tiny bit off color," he objected.

"Ah! Sick Bay!" Mrs. Beamish corrected herself with pleasure.

"And the other's as full of spirit as—"

"Bay Rum!" she interrupted. They laughed, while Mrs. Beamish looked at her list again.

"And I see somebody's got four browns—"

"Name them, Mrs. Beamish," Captain Rayner implored her, with mock seriousness.

"Oh, Brown, Jones, and Robinson!" she enumerated.

"But there are four, Betty," Lady Diana said.

"Oh, very well—Peter Robinson, then."

Their bantering was interrupted by a wrangling uproar.

"Good gracious—what's that!" Mrs. Beamish exclaimed.

"Look out there—mind the ladies!" someone shouted. It was Sartoris' voice

that gave the warning cry, as a struggling horse burst from the arena, with its rider sawing wildly on the bit, while a groom clung to the fractious animal's head. It was Kelly, the plunging bookmaker, who sat in the saddle.

"Take the brute away!" cried Lord Clanmore from the entrance.

"I object—I object!" Kelly bawled, thickly.

"Then confound you, go home and object!" Clanmore retorted.

"You can't order me—" Kelly began, ponderously.

Clanmore shook a warning finger at the man.

"The judges have ordered you out of the ring, Mr. Kelly, because your brute's dangerous and you can't ride. If you ask me I should say you were drunk." Then, to the attendants—"He doesn't come back, mind," he added.

"Drunk—what's that—you look here—" Kelly stammered, trying to dismount, in the process of which he slipped and fell sprawling upon the floor. Then, as the groom led away his mount, the erstwhile rider scrambled with difficulty to his feet, shouting—

"I'll jolly soon show you who's drunk!"

Sartoris stepped quickly in front of the infuriated man.

"Kelly! Kelly! I say—now—listen to me a minute," he said, as he took Kelly's arm and led him aside.

"D'you say I'm drunk?" Kelly demanded, shaking himself free.

"Certainly not," the Captain told him, soothingly. "Bit excited. Disheveled, that's all. What you want is just a brush up. So much in appearance, you know."

"He says I'm drunk!" Kelly shouted.

"Well, well, he's a teetotaler—and per-

haps you have been lunching—" Sartoris smiled in spite of himself.

"What's a bottle of cham?" Kelly demanded.

"Gooseberry—very often," Sartoris answered, truly.

"Mine ain't!" Kelly regarded the Captain with indignation at the fancied insult.

"Of course not, but if you add quantity to quality—" Sartoris said.

"I never stint my pals, when they're at my table," Kelly affirmed righteously.

"Oh, you have been celebrating?"

"Rather!"

"What?"

"Best day's racing we ever had yesterday. Four skinners out o' six. Lord! Didn't we rip it off Brancaster!" And Kelly's laugh at his pleasant recollection drove his fuddled resentment entirely out of his mind.

"He was betting heavily?" Sartoris questioned.

"You know him. Plunging to get home —double or quits—double or quits—but no quits this time." Kelly no longer laughed; on the contrary, his red eyes glared savagely at the Captain.

"You don't like him?" Sartoris asked.

"No! 'Cos he stands up to me,—dares to bet bigger. But I'll break him 'fore I've done wi' him."

And as Kelly uttered his hostile threat, who should emerge from the arena exit but Lord Brancaster himself.

"Mornin', my Lord!" said Kelly, lurching toward Brancaster, and ostentatiously raising his hat. "Any fancy for a bet today—Derby—Oaks—or Leger?" he inquired, while Sartoris made his escape, as if he were glad to rid himself of the situation.

"No, thank you, Kelly," Lord Brancaster replied, nodding shortly.

"Two thousand?" Kelly demanded.

"No, thanks."

Kelly pursued his quarry with great energy.

"Think I don't mean it—think I'm drunk maybe? 'Ere—d'you know what they've been saying?" He waved a hand unsteadily, indicating the arena. "In there? I ask you—am I drunk?"

"Oh, please—er—don't appeal to me," Brancaster said, embarrassed.

"Why not? You've asked me favors, and will again."

"I hope not," the young man answered, quietly.

"Do you? Well you will and I'll be there. Come on now—two thousand—any outsider—twenty to one—sixty to one—for a monkey—frightened?"

"I've no fancy," said Brancaster.

Kelly snorted.

"And no pluck? Bah—to a thousand—what will you have?" He pressed Brancaster closely.

"Nothing."

"I'll make it easy if you're short," the man persisted. "I'll wait—I did before—didn't I, when you was getting out that last mortgage, I waited. And I will again—"

Brancaster ground his teeth and glanced helplessly at the onlookers. And controlling himself with a visible effort, he answered, simply:

"Thank you, Mr. Kelly."

"Then have a bet!" Kelly continued, in wheedling tones now—"If I mayn't ride in there, I must have a bet out here—coom on, just to oblige—for a thousand—"

"I'm not betting," said Brancaster, firmly.

"Oh . . ." Kelly exclaimed, through pursed lips. "Well, of course, if it is like that—I'm sorry. But—on Monday—don't

forget—I'm here—Joe Kelly, as can buy and sell you twice over—if you want money—here he is—you've only to ask him—waiting to oblige—waiting for you, my lord, whenever you've got the brass or got the pluck to come along!"

And he took his hat off, sweeping it low in mock courtesy, and staggered off down the passage, to find Lord Clanmore and once more make his protest.

From a little table at the side of a bower Lady Diana and Mrs. Beamish had heard Kelly's words. Suddenly the elder woman leaned toward Lady Diana.

"Di—do you believe that he married that woman?" she asked quickly.

"No," said Lady Diana decisively.

"Then speak to him—speak to him," said the dry voice of the chaperone with some little tinge of sentiment. "It's just what he's breaking his heart for, I'll swear, and I won't look."

Lady Diana needed no further urging, but went at once to Brancaster.

"Lord Brancaster, Hubert," she said in a low voice.

At once the Earl turned to her.

"You, Di!" he exclaimed. "Do you still believe in me?"

"Yes, in spite of everything—in spite of everybody. And it's because I believe in you that you mustn't lose faith in yourself. Do you hear me?"

"God bless you, Di."

"Did you think I'd desert you? Granddad made me promise not to write, but all the time I've been hoping that I might meet you—that I might hear from you."

"And you believe," sighed Brancaster, "although I have no proof to put against that woman's story—although I can't account for those lost days. Ah, if I only could remember!"

"Perhaps you will, some day—and meanwhile, what's love without trust? And I love you, Hubert."

They were close by a little bower of miniature trees and Brancaster suddenly took the girl in his arms.

She permitted the embrace but for a moment, and then slipped from his arms, conscious of the fact that there was more for them to do than to deal merely with the superficials of love.

"And now—we've only a few moments —" she said breathlessly, "tell me is it true —what that man hinted—almost said, that you're ruined?"

"All but," returned Brancaster; "I've bet, plunged, deeper and deeper, till—there's next to nothing left."

"But don't you see that by doing that," chided the girl, "you were confirming everything that people said about you? If you

were once free of difficulties—you'd promise me never to bet again—to plunge again?"

"With all my heart," said Brancaster sincerely.

"Then listen," said Lady Diana. "The Whip has had her trial and come out of it with flying colors. Grand-dad says he's never had such a horse in his stables—and that nothing can stand against her for the Two Thousand. Couldn't you—"

But there was no need for her to finish her sentence.

"Back her?" exclaimed Brancaster excitedly. "Yes—for every shilling I'm worth—and find means to fight the enemy, to win, to victory—and you."

A voice at the other end of the room made them turn.

"Kelly," said Lady Diana pointing, her tone conveying a strong suggestion to Brancaster.

"I say I want Lord Clanmore," sputtered Kelly. "I'm Joe Kelly. I'm known and respected, I am. I can buy the ring or break it—if I want to—make the biggest book on earth—bet thousands—to your fivers—" His last words were directed at Lord Brancaster.

Brancaster and Lady Diana smiled happily.

"You daren't lay me the odds in thousands," suggested the young man.

"Daren't I?" returned Kelly scornfully. "To anything you fancy."

"For the Guineas?" said Brancaster.

"Yes, the favorite to ten thousand," shouted Kelly.

His loud words and Lord Brancaster's reputation for plunging, drew a crowd at once which seemed to spring from all the byways and pressed closely about the two principals. On its outskirts Lady Diana watched the two.

"No," returned Brancaster to Kelly's offer on the favorite.

"Black Eagle?" suggested the bookmaker.

"No bet."

"Raynardo," came from Kelly.

"No good," said Brancaster.

"Black Diamond," countered Kelly.

"The field," Brancaster offered.

"Yes," said Kelly instantly; "bar that lot—twenties—"

"Twenty thousand to one," said Brancaster while the crowd all but cheered.

"Yes," returned Kelly shortly.

"Twice," flaunted Brancaster.

"Three times," defied Kelly.

"Done," answered Brancaster in his turn.

"Done! Name your horse," shouted Kelly.

"The Whip!" exclaimed Brancaster, all but shouting.

CHAPTER XIII

CAPTAIN SARTORIS RECEIVES

CAPTAIN GREVILLE SARTORIS had eaten a lone but excellent dinner in his chambers, when his man announced the Rev. Verner Haslam. The Captain, busy with his coffee percolator, directed that his caller be shown in.

A moment later Haslam, with pallid cheeks, fairly bolted into the room.

"They're after me, after me!" he panted, his hands and knees trembling.

"Who are?" demanded Lady Diana's cousin sardonically.

"Detectives," returned the trembling man of the robe. "Ever since the Brancaster case began I've been hunted, hunted,—I'm dogged by them."

Sartoris shot a contemptuous glance at the man, exclaiming—

"Rats!"

"D—don't," Haslam said, jumping nervously.

Greville Sartoris sneered.

"As bad as that, eh?" he commented. "Not only dogged, but rats after you! Well, don't you worry yourself,—leave the dogs to worry the rats. One's about as real as the other."

The curate's throat worked convulsively and his hands opened and closed involuntarily, in his excitement.

"I tell you, it's true," he gasped. "I'm shadowed—"

"Then why on earth come here?" Sartoris asked him.

"To tell you that I can't go on with it," Haslam groaned—"that I'd rather make a clean breast of—"

"'THEY'RE AFTER ME!' HE PANTED"

"You mean a dirty record," Sartoris snarled, in disgust.

"Even that's better than going to jail." It was clear that the man was in a blue funk, which not even the Captain's taunts could dispel.

"Confessions won't keep you out of it. Shut up—and jail's a bare possibility; own up—and it's a dead cert," Sartoris told him, lighting a cigar.

Haslam sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

"Oh! what shall I do—what shall I do?" he sobbed.

"Do!" said Greville, with a calm all the more marked because of Haslam's agitation —"try to be a man for once, and not a cur."

"You don't know what I've been through! I've never had a moment's peace since I did it. I can't sleep, I can't eat." He rose and walked quickly to the table, stretching a

hand toward the brandy bottle that stood there. But the Captain stopped him.

"You can drink evidently," Greville said viciously, "and you do—get the jumps and go skulking about like a furtive thief to give the whole case away before you even go into the witness box."

Haslam started and his wild eyes seemed to see some far-off horror.

"What's that! The witness-box! I daren't!—I can't face it—I can't. I can't—I can't!" His voice rose to a shriek.

"Can't what?" asked Sartoris, in the tone one would use in speaking to an unreasonable child.

"I can't stand there and swear to a lie before Almighty God! I, a clerk in holy orders!"

"Holy skittles!" And the Captain exhaled a cloud of smoke. "I'm going to do it. I'm up to the neck in it just as much as you

are—and I'm prepared to swear that black's white."

"You're a different sort of man from me," Haslam told him.

"I should hope so," with infinite contempt. "Now look here, Haslam. What you've got to do's to pull yourself together, and trust to me to pull you through. A hundred to one we win—and then you can make a fresh start with money in your pocket—but—blab, and it's all up. Jail first—the gutter after—for who'll help you—except me? Well?" And he waited a bit impatiently.

Haslam thought a moment before he answered.

"I'll—I'll go on—but I've no money—I've no place to lay my head."

"It isn't an egg and you're not a chicken—though you do want to cackle," Sartoris said flippantly. "Now look here! I've

got a little cottage on the Broads—Daneham"—and he went to his desk and wrote something on an envelope as he talked.

"I'll give you the address, and wire the old caretaker that you're coming down to-night."

"To-night?"

"Yes. You can stay there till you're wanted. The train leaves Fenchurch Street at nine. You'll just have time to catch it in a taxi—there's the address," and he handed Haslam the envelope.

"But the detectives!" the curate objected.

"We'll dodge them—if they're real. You mustn't go back to your lodgings—my man'll let you out the back way here, and I'll send a few things down to Mr.—er—James Batford—that's your new traveling name," and Sartoris smiled with amusement as he looked at the fellow.

"And meantime I'll lend you a cap and a coat to cover up that black kit of yours."

With these words Sartoris left the room to get the articles with which he proposed to disguise his accomplice.

The Captain had scarcely disappeared through the doorway when Haslam made a spring for the table. Seizing the brandy bottle with shaking hand he poured himself half a tumbler of the raw spirits which he gulped greedily. As he bent over the table with one hand clutching it, and the other grasping the glass, Sartoris reappeared with the cap and the coat. Unperceived by his guest, he stood there watching him for a moment. Then he said, sardonically:

"Ah! I forgot the bottle. Well, let's hope it'll give you enough Dutch courage to carry you to Norfolk. Here, put these on," and he helped the clergyman on with the coat and gave him the cap. Then the Captain pushed an electric button, and pulling out a sovereign purse he said:

"Here's a sovereign for you. The fare's

fifteen bob, and the taxi'll be three; and don't make a beast of yourself with the balance."

When Sartoris's man appeared, in answer to the bell, the Captain directed him briefly.

"Emmett, take Mr. Haslam out by the back way—understand?"

"Yes, sir." And in an undertone—"Can I speak to you a moment, sir?"

"What is it?" asked Greville.

"The—er—young woman from Falconhurst, sir," the man said, inquiringly.

"Myrtle! not if I know it! Say I'm out—or—wait a bit! Perhaps she's got some stable news. All right. Let her come in, Emmett." And turning to the clergyman—"Off you go, Haslam," he cried. "I'll write you."

"G—good—night!" Haslam answered as he turned away.

"Oh—good night," said Sartoris indifferently, "and good luck!" And when Em-

mett had shown him, trembling, out of the room, the Captain added—

"And good riddance! I wish it were for good," he said to himself grimly. And then in another second, Myrtle Anson closed the door behind her and stood in Sartoris's chambers.

The thought that she might really be able to help him get a bit of ready money made Sartoris so gracious toward the sister of the jockey that he took her into his arms.

"Ah, Myrtle, my dear little girl," he said.

"You are glad to see me, Greville?" she asked tenderly.

"Of course," returned Sartoris, "but have you anything to tell me? You know I'm devilishly hard up, and a little tip—"

"I have something to tell you," she began.

"About the horses?" he asked eagerly.

"About myself," she said. "My brother —Harry—knows how it is with me. He follows me everywhere."

"If he comes here—young cub," blustered Sartoris.

"Don't call him that," remonstrated the jockey's sister. "He knows because he loves me. He's read it in my face. Oh, Greville, keep your promise to me and make me your wife before it is too late."

"My dear Myrtle," he protested, "I'm a beggar. I can't keep myself."

"Is that all? Is it only money?"

"If I were a rich man I'd marry you tomorrow."

"Then—then—if I show you a way to become rich," she said eagerly.

At his quick exclamation she went on:

"I swore that I'd never tell you another stable secret—but to make you rich—to marry me—yesterday they tried the Whip."

"With what?" he asked tersely, his stable sense alert.

"Silver Shoe," said the girl.

He whistled.

"That would tell them," he said. "She's a flyer."

"The Whip won—pulling double—by twenty lengths—back her," the girl advised.

"Twenty to one! It's a fortune," exclaimed Sartoris.

"But do it at once," the girl continued. "I heard his lordship tell Harry he meant to do the touts this time—that he would tell the world himself directly the horse started for Newmarket."

"When's that?"

"To-morrow, Sunday, night. They're going to put a horse box on to the fast train that comes through Falconhurst at seven-twenty."

All the greed of Sartoris's small nature was aroused, and not realizing the self-revelation and satire that his own words revealed, he exclaimed:

"Myrtle, you're an A1 little girl—a dear, sweet, little girl."

"And you'll marry me?" she questioned anxiously.

Before Sartoris was put to the necessity of further invention and delay, there was a knock on the door and in answer to his master's call Sartoris's man came in with the statement that a "Mr. Kelly" wished to see Sartoris. The latter directed that he be brought in. Myrtle he led into another room.

As Kelly came in, scowling at Sartoris's man, the Captain greeted him heartily with:

"Kelly, you're the very man I wanted. I've just had a wire. Commission—chap I know wants to back the Whip for two thousand.

"Then you'd better try someone else," said the bookmaker shortly. "I'm fed up with the Whip, I am. The Whip's just what I've come to see you about. The horse is in your cousin's stable and you ought to know

something about him. Wot I want to know is wot is it—and 'ow good is it?"

"Why?" demanded Sartoris.

"'Cos I lost my temper," explained Kelly, "and lost my 'ead, too, with Brancaster, an' I laid him twenty to one against the Whip."

"You did?"

"Three times."

"What in?"

"Thousands!"

"Good heavens, man," said Sartoris, not entirely displeased to see another in trouble also. "You'll be broke. They tried the Whip yesterday. She romped home. The best horse they've ever had in the Beverley stables. Cover, man! Cover!"

"Cover be 'anged," said the disgusted Kelly. "I've tried, but the whole town rings with it, and the 'orse is now five to one."

"Anything is better than nothing," Sartoris advised. "If you wait you'll get worse. Beverley is going to tell the wide world. Oh, you're in a hole—put there by Brancaster."

This lack of sympathy on the part of Sartoris angered Kelly.

"I'm in a 'ole, Mr. Captain Sartoris," he said threateningly. "But what are you? I'm going to get out of this 'ole and you are going to 'elp me. I've been a good pal to you—now it's your turn."

"What can I do?" demanded Sartoris with a shrug of his shoulders.

"I'll tell you what I can do," returned Kelly, taking a piece of paper from his pocket. "You see this bill for three thousand pounds—due to-morrow."

"Yes, that's right," answered Sartoris easily. "But I want you to let me renew it. I'll pay you the interest to-morrow and give you another bill."

"With Lady Diana's name on it again?" insinuated Kelly.

"Yes. Isn't her name good enough?" demanded her cousin.

"Quite, but I'd like to see her put it there. Because I don't believe she ever did. I'm a-going to ask her. So you can keep that new bill of yourn and I'll keep this—till after the Two Thousand race. And if the Whip wins I shall take it to Lady Diana an' ask her how her signature comes there. But if the Whip loses I'll give it back to you, and I'll throw you a couple o' thousand in as a make-weight."

"How can I stop the Whip from winning?" asked Sartoris, fearful that his forging of his cousin's name would soon come to light.

"That's your job," returned Kelly. "Lots of things 'appens to 'orses—especially favorites. When Klarikoff was favorite for the Leger he got burnt in 'is box."

"Do you suggest that I shall—" began Sartoris.

"Use your 'ead, that's all," said Kelly. "You've got plenty. But if the Whip wins it will be in a halter—and don't you forget it."

The sound of a sudden scuffle interrupted them. The noise of one man pushing aside another came from outside the door.

"I tell you I will go in," said Harry Anson's voice.

In another moment the Whip's jockey had forced his way into the room.

CHAPTER XIV

COFFEE AND REPARTEE

KELLY recognized the Whip's jockey at once.

"Harry Anson!" he exclaimed. "Oh! Since he's dropped in so friendly like, see if you can't settle something with him. I'm off. Hello, Harry."

He crossed partially to the door, and then beckoned the despondent Captain to one side.

"But when the race is over, remember, you've got to settle with me," he warned finally, and was gone.

Angrily Sartoris turned upon the jockey.

"What do you mean by bursting into my rooms like this?" he said.

Harry's answer was direct and to the point.

"I've come here after my sister. Where is she?" he shouted, almost shaking his fist in the other's face.

"What's your sister to me?" answered Sartoris in apparent disgust.

"That's what I want to know," returned the jockey, "and that's what I mean to know before I go out of this room."

"She's not here," said Sartoris.

"You're a liar," instantly responded the jockey. "I watched her come in half an hour ago, and she's not come out. Where's that door go to?"

He pointed to the door behind which Myrtle was hiding.

"What's that to you?" demanded Sartoris.

"I'll show you."

Anson started for the door, but the Captain blocked his way.

"You won't," he said.

The jockey picked up a heavy decanter from the table.

"Get out of my way, or I'll—" he shouted, as he sprang toward Sartoris.

But the door opened suddenly and Myrtle rushed between them.

"Harry," she exclaimed.

Her brother let the decanter fall to the floor, where it broke into pieces.

"Myrtle," Harry exclaimed in an agony. "It's true, then? You were here with him alone? Myrtle, tell me I'm thinking wrong of you!" Her head dropped. "Look me in the face—tell me—"

Her head was still bowed.

"I can't," she said brokenly.

A half sob came from Harry as he sank into a chair.

"Myrtle—my little sister," he groaned. "You his—his—"

Down by his side the girl knelt.

"Harry, Harry, don't—you a man—cry for me like that—I'm not worth it," she said.

For a moment the jockey raised his head while the tears coursed down his cheeks.

"Ah, Myrtle! You was once—worth all the world before—you met him," he sobbed.

The drawling and unfeeling voice of Sartoris broke in upon the anguish of the brother and sister.

"See here, my lad," he said, elevating his eyebrows, "suppose for one moment we look at the matter coolly—"

Abruptly Harry pushed his sister back as he got to his feet.

"Coolly," he said, "when you've ruined my sister! Look at it coolly! Why, every drop of blood in my body would cry shame on me if I did. Call yourself a gentleman!" —he was standing directly before Sartoris now—"Well, I'm little better than a stable lad, but I wouldn't treat any woman as you've treated her—a motherless girl—with no one in the world but me."

"My good boy, I assure you—" drawled on Sartoris.

His tone again infuriated the boy.

"Curse your assurance," said Harry. "There's only one thing I want to hear from you. Are you going to marry my sister—yes or no."

"No," said Sartoris clearly.

Maddened, Harry plunged one hand into his pocket, and the next moment was covering the Captain with a revolver.

The girl rushed toward him, but at his stern command of "stand back," she stopped.

But Sartoris did not lose his presence of mind.

"Oh, fire away, my little fellow," he said in his slow voice, "but if you shoot as straight as you ride you won't make your sister a widow, and I shan't be able to make her a wife."

The unexpected directness of this attack upon his emotions disconcerted the boy, and involuntarily he lowered his weapon.

"Quite so," said Sartoris, and then to point out clearly to the other his own lack of nerves, he drew himself a cup of coffee from the still simmering machine.

"Have a cup?" he asked, "No? Well, then let's take all that as said—and talk sense. You want me to marry your sister. I don't want the Whip to win the Two Thousand. I've backed something else. Lord Beverley never bets. It would do no harm if you didn't ride your best."

"I ride my best or not at all," returned the jockey, forgetting his own misery at the moment, at thought of his glorious horse.

"Not what I mean," said Sartoris. "Ride the Whip by all means, but pull her a little, my good boy—and perhaps I'll—"

"You dare say that to me, who's always

been an honest lad," came from the jockey.

"Do you prefer that to her being an 'honest' "—began Sartoris.

Harry had now absently placed his revolver on Sartoris's writing table, and he had forgotten it.

Quickly Myrtle went to Harry as a cry of indignation came from both brother and sister.

"That's the price," continued Lady Diana's cousin. "Here's your chance. What d'you say?"

Before Harry could frame a reply Myrtle had answered.

"No," she said, strongly, her head now erect and proud. "Do you think I'd buy my honor at the price of his? No. You've robbed me, but you shan't rob him. If I must face shame—I'll face it alone."

"No, you won't; not while I'm here, lass," said the brother to his sister. "We'll go to

his lordship straight. He'll see justice done when he knows what you are, Captain Sartoris."

"And what she is," put in Sartoris quickly. "Don't forget that. Hold your tongue and I'm quite willing to provide for her—and hold mine. But talk—of her—or her lovers—"

Myrtle gave a sudden exclamation at Sartoris's threat, but Harry put his arm about her.

"Come away, lass," he said. "It's a fine thing, sir, of a gentleman to foul a girl's good name—to try to break a poor lad's pride—but you can't. As for your money, she'd never touch a farthing. Lord knows what dirty way it was got. We're going now, but when we meet, if her sorrow does tie my tongue—mind this—I'm just a stable lad, but I'm honest, and whenever I look you straight in the face, I know you for the lying dog you are!"

"HARRY PUT HIS ARM ABOUT HER. 'COME AWAY, LASS!' HE SAID"

When they had gone Sartoris stretched himself on a sofa, and lighting a fresh cigarette, buried his aristocratic nose deep in the evening paper. It was not the first occasion of its kind in which Greville Sartoris had played a similar part.

CHAPTER XV

AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S

THE WHIP'S trainer, Tom Lambert, had gone to Madame Tussaud's primarily out of vanity. He had had the chance to act as guide to a party of the upper servants of Falconhurst, and as he had visited the place seven years before he thought that this would be a fine opportunity to display his knowledge.

The little party had entered the Chamber of Horrors, and all stood transfixed, gazing at the villainous caricatures of famous murderers, when suddenly one of the girls started and screamed. Lambert turned round sharply.

"Confound it, Mary, what the deuce—" he began.

"Oh! I saw it move!" the girl cried.

"What?"

"I don't know," she answered, lamely, ashamed of her spasm of fear.

"I want to see Dr. Crippen!" wailed little Henry.

"Be quiet," said Mrs. Bunting, the wife of the head whip.

"I—I'll wait for you upstairs," murmured Mary, moving off. The girl had had her fill of the excitement.

"What are you frightened of? They're only dummies," Lambert told her. "And 'ere, all of you, don't look as if you was at a funeral. We've come 'ere to enjoy ourselves."

"I want to see Dr. Crippen!" howled little Henry again.

"Do you know what I want?" the trainer asked the boy sharply.

"No!"

"I want to smack your 'ead and I'll do it in a minute," Lambert admonished him.

"I want to see Dr. Crippen first," the lad persisted.

"O—very well—which is it? 'ere you are!" said Lambert, looking at the names on the high enclosure which contained the most infamous of the exhibits. He caught hold of the child and held him up to one of the wax figures—not the celebrated doctor at all, as it happened. "That's Dr. Crippen—nice beauty, isn't he—just your living image—wouldn't you like to kiss 'im?"

"No! I want another!" the boy protested.

Lambert looked at his young charge in surprise.

"Another what?" he asked.

"I want another Dr. Crippen!"

"Another Doc . . .!" and with decision Lambert said, "Mrs. Bunting, this child's not well. You ought to give 'im something every night—and see the Doctor every

mornin'. If 'e was mine I know what I'd give 'im," and he flourished his walking-stick in the air. "Peevish little beast, always 'owling and 'ollering—the child's in pain it's my belief—if I had a child with a face like that I should say it meant one of two things—either he'd pinched a tanner from the collection plate or he'd swallowed a bit of slate pencil."

"There's nothing wrong with 'im," answered Mrs. Bunting, "but he's growing every day."

"Growing a bigger nuisance every day," growled Lambert, "always interfering and interrupting his betters—spoiling everyone's pleasure." He turned again to his catalogue. "Now where are we? 'The Six Stages of Wrong. A graphic record of a downward career.' "

"What's it all about, Tom?" asked Bunting, avoiding his wife's malevolent eye.

"Who's the lady?" Bunting persisted, pointing to an intense looking figure of a female.

Lambert searched his catalogue.

"'Number 288, Miss Christabel Pankhurst, eldest daughter of —— . . . for this she suffered one week's imprisonment and afterwards'—no, 'ang it, that's the wrong page—come to the next group. You see what's the matter. It's like this, this cove he's been playing bridge with a bloke that knew a bit—the money what he lost is the money what 'is master 'ad given 'im to pay for the lamp oil—then 'e comes and meets this gentleman—tells 'im the tale—bites 'is ear for a bit, and 'ere—move up one please —'ere the bloke wants 'is money back—why shouldn't 'e?—that makes the first bloke nasty, goes to the other bloke's office at night and 'its 'im on the 'ead—well, of course, any bloke as does that sort of thing gets ruined

—it might 'appen to you or to me to-morrow."

"I want to see Dr. Crippen!" the little boy whimpered.

"Be quiet," Lambert begged. "Will no one give that child a banana? Now up 'ere this is the stocks, which they used to use in the Royal Exchange, which is why they still call it the Stock Exchange—some people say they ought to use 'em still. 'Number 270. The 'Ampstead Tragedy,' " he read. " 'Mrs. Pearcy and the Actual Perambulator.' "

"What was she doing with it?" asked Bunting.

The trainer looked again at his catalogue.

"Left the kid at 'ome and goin' for the washing, I suppose," he replied. "The original iron gates from Newgate, through which Jack Shepard escaped," he continued, reading from the book.

"My word! I wonder 'ow 'e did it!" Bunting exclaimed involuntarily.

"I want to see Dr. Crippen!" little Henry persisted.

"Will no one give that child a banana?" Lambert's patience was all but exhausted.

The trainer continued to explain as best he could the mysteries of that awful room, and had piloted his gaping friends to one side of the room, where they were busily engaged in examining some ancient instrument of torture, when two men entered. One was the superintendent of the Wax Works, and the other his head-workman. The two approached the structure—an affair much like a jury-box—where Dr. Crippen stood stiffly among his nefarious associates.

"You see, sir," said the head-workman, "Wainwright's firm as can be since we had his feet seen to. It's this 'ere Dr. Crippen as gives all the trouble. If I could only

take 'im away now, sir, we could put him all right by Monday."

"Yes, but it's Saturday," objected the superintendent, not wishing to deprive any of his Saturday night visitors of the pleasure of gazing upon the celebrated doctor.

"So it is, sir—but it's nigh on closing time, an' I got the van at the door."

"Is there room?" asked his superior.

"Rather, sir—I'm only taking Mr. Churchill, Miss Maude Hallen, and the Kaiser for a touch-up. 'Arry Lauder and King Halfonso will stand hover till after the 'olidays."

"Very well then," the superintendent assented, and he took the figure of Dr. Crippen by the arm and rocked it slightly. "Yes—it is hardly safe."

The head-workman beckoned to his assistants who appeared in the doorway.

"Come along, boys!" and he opened the

door of the platform. "Dr. Crippen—" he directed—"and into the van—sharp! Beg pardon, sir," he continued, turning to his chief, "but I'll be bringing back President Roosevelt on Monday. Shall I put him up alongside the lions?"

"He might be more appropriate inside 'em," the superintendent answered, for he was of a facetious turn—a saving grace in a wax works employé.

Unnoticed by the Falconhurst sightseers, Dr. Crippen was borne ignominously away, while the fascinated visitors worked their way around the room, until they reached the jury-box again.

"'Number 323. William Palmer of Rugely,'" Lambert read, stopping before one of the figures. "'A cold-blooded assassin. Under the guise of love and friendship he sacrificed his victims to satisfy his lust for gold; and callous to the voice of nature he smiled upon his crimes. He was

an owner of race-horses'—I don't believe a word of it." And then, moving down the line of staring monstrosities, he began—

"This chap in the bath—but Mrs. Bunting is present—" and the trainer stopped abruptly, his native modesty forbidding him to dilate upon such a subject. He passed to another exhibit.

" 'Marwood, the executioner, taken from life!' " he read.

"Lor! Did they 'ang the 'angman?" asked Bunting.

"I want to see Dr. Crippen!" Little Henry felt that his wishes deserved some notice.

"Will nobody give that child—a real good 'iding! Just when I'm doing my best to liven you up, improve your minds, and tell you all about it, interrupts me every minute!" Lambert protested. He closed his catalogue with a snap.

"If you want to know any more about it

you can read your catalogue for yourselves," he finished, mopping his forehead.

"The dear child's tired, that 'e is. Ain't you 'Enery Claude?" said the boy's mother, as she took his hand, and frowned resentfully at their discouraged guide.

"Oh! take 'im on upstairs," said Bunting, as the boy began to cry.

"Come along, 'Enery. You shall have a nice stale bun in the refreshment room," and with these soothing words, Mrs. Bunting led the disappointed youngster away to the upper and less terrible regions, followed by the others. Lambert alone remained behind, for as he waited to act as a sort of rear guard to his retiring forces, he caught sight of Myrtle Anson, who had entered unseen by the others and was now standing in the shadow of an alcove. She motioned silently to the trainer.

"Why, Myrtle, my lass," he exclaimed kindly.

The girl plunged at once into her errand with him.

"I want to tell you something—you alone—and I want you to promise me that whatever I tell you you won't tell anyone—even that I told you."

"Of course I will, my lass," he said. "What's wrong."

"It's about the Whip. Someone wants to stop her winning," she said, realizing that her task would be very difficult if she were going to succeed in telling just what she wanted to without telling all.

"Lots do, but they won't," answered the confident trainer, not taking her at all seriously. "She'll just romp in."

"But this is one who means to stop her by fair means or foul," she went on. "He tried to get Harry to pull her."

"And Harry knocked him down, I hope," snorted the trainer.

"He couldn't do that—but—but—he re-

fused—you know he would—and—he wasn't going to speak—for—for my sake—but I couldn't rest." The girl was becoming confused in her effort to tell but a part of the truth, the part that would serve merely as a warning. "I was afraid that he—the person—might try and injure the Whip—some way to prevent her running—"

"Who is he?" sternly asked the aroused horseman.

"I don't want to tell you that," she said. "Don't ask me. I only came to warn you to watch the horse so that they mayn't have a chance to injure her."

"How can I, when I don't know where the danger's coming from?" continued Lambert, the drops appearing on his forehead, as he tried to penetrate behind her words. "Look here, Myrtle, my lass, you've told me so much, you've got to tell me the rest. Come, now, I've got to know

the man's name who wants to nobble the Whip."

"No, no!"

"But I say, yes! It's your duty to them as has reared you and looked to you all your life. Out with it—what's his name?"

Under his compelling earnestness the girl's head drooped. Then she raised it bravely and, looking him square in the eye, said:

"It's Captain Sartoris."

"His lordship's cousin—you're dreaming," he said in amazement.

"I'm not," she asserted. "I wish I were. I swear it."

Into the agonized senses of the trainer there came to him from the hall outside a voice he knew and loved and feared well, too.

Mrs. Beamish was saying:

"Oh, my good woman, don't come and bother me."

Lambert fairly leaped into the air.

"That's her voice, a thousand to nothing," he lamented.

"Mrs. Beamish!" the girl exclaimed.

"Yes," went on the perturbed trainer, "and if she catches you and me together again, I'm done for— Run away, my gal —for goodness' sake, go away—right out of the building—write to me—I mean I'll write to you—we'll keep writing to one another."

He was now hopping up and down in his agitation.

"Is this the Chamber of Horrors?" he heard the voice he feared so much asking outside.

"I should say it was," groaned Tom.

Myrtle was amused for the moment.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Goodness knows," he said, looking about the room for another means of exit. But he could find none. Finally he scanned

closely each little den and even each figure in turn. His eyes fell upon the jury-box and the vacant place in the group of murderers where Dr. Crippen had stood.

"Do?" he repeated, as a sudden inspiration came to him. "I'm going to be Dr. Crippen."

In a moment he had darted up the little flight of steps that led into the jury-box, had stepped over the railing, and was standing posing in the place lately occupied by the wax figure of Dr. Crippen. A black silk handkerchief he had taken from another figure he tied about his throat, so that it somewhat resembled the celebrated doctor's beard.

He had barely assumed his motionless pose, when Mrs. Beamish entered, followed at a distance by a young woman in the shabby weeds of a poor widow.

Myrtle turned and came face to face with Mrs. Beamish. The latter had known that

Tom Lambert was to guide the Falconhurst servants through the place and had drawn her own conclusions.

"Good evening, ma'am," said Myrtle quite respectfully.

"More than can be said of the evening's work," commented the outraged Mrs. Beamish, as she glanced about. "Where's your accomplice?"

"My what, ma'am?" the girl asked.

"The man you've been keeping an assignation with," snapped Lady Diana's companion.

"I have kept no assignation with any man," the girl said, her tones still respectful toward this woman whose jealousy she knew and sympathized with.

"You may tell that to the marines, my girl," went on the jealous woman. "I know better, and you ought to. A man old enough to be your father, and ugly enough to frighten the crows."

"I don't—" began Myrtle.

"You may go now," said Mrs. Beamish, and Myrtle, who had not relished this scene with the jealous woman, went at once.

As Mrs. Beamish turned from the girl she brushed against the woman who had been following her.

"What do you want, pray?" asked Lambert's elderly flame.

"Nothing, madam," returned the woman, "I thought you seemed to want somebody."

"So I do and only let me catch him," snapped Mrs. Beamish.

"If you could describe him, my lady," said the other.

"I can't. Language fails—dictionary language."

"What's he like?"

Mrs. Beamish had been looking about her busily, seeking Lambert. Her eyes for the past few moments had been traveling down the line of the murderers in the jury-box.

Suddenly they rested upon the posing Lambert and recognized him.

"So that's it, is it?" she remarked in her hardest and dryest voice. "The wretch."

Lambert, however, seeing her eyes leave him, was sure that she had not recognized him.

To the other woman Mrs. Beamish turned and then pointing to the murderers she asked for Lambert's benefit:

"What are those?"

"Those are murderers, madam," said the woman.

"They look it," returned Mrs. Beamish, her voice cutting Lambert to the quick, "every man Jack of them—especially that one in the corner with the hideous red face." She glanced into the catalogue she carried. "No. 9—Dr. Crippen. Just what I should have guessed. You can see the man is a monster of wickedness."

"So you can, my lady," agreed the other.

Lambert shook in his boots, but not with amusement.

"Crime written large across his ugly face in every line of it," resumed Mrs. Beamish, who was having her revenge. "And there are a good many of them—a hardened old villain. I could believe anything of a man with that face."

"So could I, my lady," agreed her companion readily.

"Yes—and he's extraordinarily like a man I've known and suspected for a long time."

"Lor', lady, that ain't no compliment to the gentleman."

"He isn't a gentleman," said Lambert's punisher. "He's quite a common person—and behaves himself as such."

"You don't say so, lady!"

"Don't I, though! And that's nothing to what I could say. But there, I can't look

at the creature. It makes me quite ill, and I'm tired. I shall sit down for a bit—until they turn the people out."

She seated herself directly below the jury-box and beneath Lambert. Involuntarily the trainer, who had been finding it difficult to hold his pose and keep his face as expressionless as wax, groaned.

Instantly the woman who had been talking with Mrs. Beamish exclaimed:

"Lor, what was that?"

"What?"

"Didn't you hear it? Sounded like a groan."

Mrs. Beamish had known perfectly what the sound was, but she had a very definite plan in her mind regarding Lambert, and she pretended that she had not heard.

"Well, why not?" she responded, "it's the Chamber of Horrors. I dare say it's done by machinery—somebody suffering tortures—or on the rack—or something."

As Mrs. Beamish laid her gold mesh bag down on the bench beside her, just under a sign "Beware of pickpockets," the other woman sank down on the bench with a smothered "Oh!"

"What's the matter?" asked Mrs. Beamish anxiously.

"It's my hunger, my lady," she said. "I'm out of work. I haven't had a morsel of food all day. I came in here thinking that some kind of person might assist me, but—"

Mrs. Beamish passed to the other a very handsome bottle of smelling salts, which the woman kept.

"Feel any better?" asked Mrs. Beamish.

"A little," confessed the other, and she slipped Mrs. Beamish's gold bag into her pocket.

"Oh, my lady, how kind you are," she added, as into her specially arranged pocket

went all of the other loose valuables of the jealous Mrs. Beamish.

"If you'd let me offer you something," and Mrs. Beamish's hand made a movement vaguely toward the place where her purse had been.

But the other knew the impulse and forestalled it.

"No, no, my lady," she said; "I know you mean kindly, but don't spoil it. Poor I may be, and unhappy I am—but I has my pride."

She was half way to the door now.

"Thank heaven I has my pride, my lady," she said once again and was gone.

"Poor, dear soul," commented Mrs. Beamish aloud to the unbounded delight of poor Lambert, who did not dare move, "and so dignified in her sorrow. What hard lives some people have."

There was a suspicion of tears in her eyes, and she put her hand in her pocket to find her handkerchief.

"Why, wherever's my handkerchief!" she exclaimed. Then as gradually the truth dawned— "And—and my purse, and where's my gold bag? That woman!"

In a moment more she was running from the Chamber of Horrors, crying:

"Here! Stop thief! Stop thief!"

CHAPTER XVI

LOCKED IN

AT the hen-like retreat of the Hon. Mrs. Beamish, Tom Lambert laughed long and loud, repeating some of her phrases of pity for the old woman who had robbed her.

Finally, his mirth over, he put one leg partially across the jury-box rail, intending to leave the place, seek out Mrs. Beamish and have a good laugh at her expense. But the voice of Sartoris and Mrs. D'Aquila outside deterred him, and again froze his face to a likeness of his conception of wax.

Lambert was quite immovable when Sartoris and the woman who maintained that she was the wife of Brancaster came into the Chamber of Horrors.

"We shall be all right here," she said.

"I suppose there's no chance of our getting shut in? There's a notice here about the hydraulic door closing automatically after the bell rings."

Sartoris laughed.

"Only to frighten the bumpkins," he responded, "and add to the horrors. If it did close they'd hear us shout, I expect."

The chance of it had impressed the woman.

"They wouldn't," she said, "I noticed that. There's a muffled door beyond. And on the last stroke of the clock every attendant will be rushing out for a drink. Saturday night, you know. I don't want to be locked in here until Monday."

"In the dark, too!" commented the other. "If it comes off I'll sit and hold your hand."

Directly beneath Lambert and in the same spot formerly occupied by Mrs. Beamish, Mrs. D'Aquila seated herself and motioned the Captain to her side.

"Well, sit and talk quickly," she said. "I'm in a hurry. I've brought you all I could spare." She gave to him a number of bank notes from her purse. "Notes—I thought you'd prefer them—three hundred —toward that interest."

"Shan't ever be grateful enough," he said.

"Quite sure you won't," she responded.

"I'll give you something in return," he went on, gloomily.

"How sweet of you; what is it?"

"Bad news!"

"Good gracious!"

"That horse of Beverley's—the Whip—has been tried—a flyer—the Two Thousand's a certainty."

There was one moment while Sartoris was giving this piece of stable information when Lambert, the Whip's trainer, had much difficulty in remembering that he was an image of wax. He moved suddenly and had great trouble in not leaving his perch and giv-

ing Sartoris the threshing he knew he deserved. But he believed that, since they were now on the subject of his beloved horse, patience would be vastly rewarded.

Mrs. D'Aquila had not seemed startled at what Sartoris had said.

"That doesn't sound bad," she said. "If one had a bit on, at say, twenty—"

"No chance," the Captain interrupted. "Di must have told Brancaster, for he caught Kelly, the big book-maker, half drunk and off his guard and rushed him with three big bets. If the Whip wins, he'll win a fortune."

"Brancaster," she exclaimed in a voice of gloom, now thoroughly aroused.

"Yes, he'll have lots of money to fight you with. If the horse gets beat he'll be nearly broke."

For a moment Mrs. D'Aquila was in deep thought.

"Horses do get beat sometimes," she said.

"Yes," said Sartoris equally gloomy. "That's what Kel—what a chap I know said. When Klarikoff was favorite for the Leger he got burnt in his box."

"In his stable?" she asked.

"No, horse-box on the railway," he returned.

"I wonder how it was done," she said in a tone that might have stood for the suggestion of an evil deed, so sinister it was.

Sartoris shrugged his shoulders.

"Accident," he said in his thin voice. "I'd give something for another."

"You would?" she asked in a peculiar tone.

"Yes," he said frankly. "I've had a plunge on something else. I want to see the Whip beaten. I must see her beaten. That's why I told you. You've got quick wits—"

"The jockey," she suggested.

"Honest idiot."

"The stable?"

"Guarded like the Sultan's harem! Beverley's pet fad."

"Yes, the train's the place," she said musingly, getting to her feet.

Puzzled, Sartoris also arose.

"How? His lad and probably his clown of a trainer, Lambert, will travel with him in the box," he said.

"When does he travel?" she asked.

"To-morrow. They'll stop the evening train to Grantham by signal at Falconhurst, tack the box on behind, and slip it at Menfield, where the down express will pick it up—"

"Slip it—" she said, while her thoughts were busy on some sudden problem.

"Yes," he explained. "It's what they always do, don't you know, pull a string thing that undoes the coupling—and the horse-box slows down and stops at the Junction while the train runs through—"

"Has—has it ever gone wrong?" she asked in a way to arouse his suspicions.

"What?"

"The slip business. What would happen if the horse-box were slipped too soon—say Falconhurst tunnel—and left standing on the line?"

"The next train would see the red tail-light and stop," he said.

There was a world of potential tragedy in the woman's voice, as with the smile of a destiny of evil she went on:

"But—in the—dark—it will be dark—if someone had dropped off the tail-light before the next train could stop?"

"The box would be smashed," he said in a dazed fashion.

"And the horse?" She paused for a full moment. Then she went on:

"The train does not run fast through the tunnel. I've been there dozens of times.

I've seen guards do the thing—it's easy enough—to swing from carriage to carriage—along the foot plate—to drop off the red tail-light—to pull the slip—and let the next train—"

With her hands brought violently together she let inference finish her sentence for her.

"Whom could one trust?" demanded Sartoris suddenly.

"When I've work to do," she said, "I only trust myself."

"But, you couldn't—" he began.

"No, but you could—easily—if you were on the train," she said, "if you joined it further north and none knew it—you could do it—if you want it done so badly and you have the pluck—"

She was interrupted by the ringing of the bell which gave notice that the hydraulic door would close shortly.

"Ah, the door!" she exclaimed.

Then in a low, but strong tone she went on:

"What's going to happen? Is the Whip going to win—or will there be an accident?"

They left quickly then, as they did not wish to run any risk of being locked in when there was work to do, as she had phrased it.

For a full half minute Lambert stared after them, then he leaned over the jury-box and shook his fist in the direction of the retreating pair.

"No there won't, my pretty lady," he said, aloud, the solitude and the company of the waxen images inclining him to hear the sound of his own voice. "There'll be no accident. Why? Because that clown of a trainer Lambert will stop it—because he'll send his horse safe to the post first and he'll talk to you after—tell you what he heard—tell you to your face what you are—"

The second bell rang and immediately without waiting to allow any who might be in the Chamber of Horrors to get out, the unseen attendant on another floor pulled a lever and the door closed with a hard bang. Lambert was locked within the Chamber of Horrors, with no way of escape until Monday morning.

"Here, stop that!" he roared, as he got down from the jury-box and tried to open the door, "I tell you there's someone inside —open the door at once—don't play the confounded fool—I tell you it's most important —let me out—let me out—"

But he could not move the door. Then he put his hands to his mouth and shouted:

"Help, help, help!"

All of the lights except a few near the ceiling were switched out, adding to the terror of the trainer's situation.

"Don't do that—don't do that!" he fairly howled. "Stop it—don't leave me here in

the dark—I shall go mad—alone here in the dark with these—alone for a day and a night and another night till Monday while—"

Into his frenzied mind there came thoughts of the Whip. At the picture of his beloved and first member of the Beverley string lying upon some railroad track dying, his terror increased as he cried:

"They are smashing my horse—they'll smash the Whip—while I'm locked up here—they shan't—let me out I say—let me out."

The manifold tortures of the situation were too much for the trainer and he sank down, sobbing and screaming while even the lights in the ceiling faded away.

CHAPTER XVII

MRS. BEAMISH RELENTS

MRS. BEAMISH was decidedly uneasy as she sat in the morning room at Falconhurst, on the evening of the day following that on which Tom Lambert had been locked into the Chamber of Horrors. Lord Beverley had been furious when Lambert failed to appear, and Lady Di was even then at the station to see the Whip put safely into the horse-box for the trip to Newmarket.

The Marquis paced up and down the room fretting and fuming.

"You may say what you like, Betty," he said to Mrs. Beamish, "I say that it's nothing short of disgraceful. Here's Lambert —knows perfectly well that the Whip starts for Newmarket to-night by the seven-thirty —and that he's got to travel with her—and

not only is there not a sign of the man, but not a word from him!"

"Perhaps he thought it didn't matter," Mrs. Beamish volunteered.

"Didn't matter! Betty! You're not generally a fool. I beg you won't talk like one. Didn't matter! With a mare that no one can manage but him and Di—and her jockey!" The Marquis looked at his companion with amazement.

"I suppose he thought the jockey could go with her!"

"Of course he can—and of course he will," he said. "I've arranged for that—but if Harry Anson goes to Newmarket to-night—Tom Lambert'll go for good to-morrow morning."

"Perhaps he may be coming by the train that gets in from town at seven-twenty," she suggested.

"And perhaps he mayn't. Betty! You'll drive me mad with your perhapses and sup-

poses. The seven-twenty is always late! Lambert ought to have been here this morning. Why isn't he? Answer me that! Why isn't he?" he demanded, striking the table in his excitement.

"How should I know! Unless—he may —have been—been—detained," she said guiltily.

"Detained! Where? Couldn't he wire? Isn't there the telephone? The man's not a fool!"

"I'm not so sure of that!" Mrs Beamish commented.

"But I am. I wish I were as sure—that he isn't the other extreme—a rogue." Lord Beverley was in an exceedingly pessimistic frame of mind.

"Tom Lambert a rogue! No!—whatever he is, but he's not that!" Mrs. Beamish exclaimed. She was indignant in spite of herself.

"You seem to be very sure of what he is

and what he isn't, Betty. But let me tell you, that for a long time past stable secrets have been leaking out in a most inexplicable way. Now, Lambert is just the man who could have given them away, and I'm beginning to believe he's just the man who did." There was almost conviction in the Marquis's words.

Mrs. Beamish sprang to her feet hotly.

"And I'll swear—I mean I'll pledge my word, he didn't. What! Tom Lambert do a dirty trick! Tom Lambert betray anybody's trust—he'd sooner die; he's got his little faults, but an honester man doesn't breathe. Why I remember years ago, when he was quite a lad—" and she stopped suddenly.

"I daresay," replied Beverley with irony. "I don't want to hear what happened years ago—I'm thinking of to-night! I'm thinking of the fact that Di's gone to see the Whip off by the seven-thirty—that it only

wants ten minutes and that Lambert's not here! What have you got to say to that?"

"No doubt there's a reason—there's some explanation."

"Then give it to me!" he demanded grimly.

"I can't," she told him, while to herself she said, with woman's perversity, "I won't!"

"Why not, if you hold the key!"

"Hold the key!" she protested.

"Of his conduct," said her relative snappishly. "Hold a brief for him if you like it better."

"He—he may—have met with an accident," she said lamely.

"Let's hope so. Bless me, I don't mean that! But I do mean it'll have to be a bad one to make me condone his absence. I don't want any more words, Betty. Tom Lambert's been in my stables now for nearly thirty years, but so surely as he doesn't

travel with the Whip to-night—so surely I'll sack him to-morrow." And Lord Beverly stalked out of the room.

"Sack him! Sack Tom Lambert!" Mrs. Beamish exclaimed to herself involuntarily. "Oh, no! I didn't bargain for that!" She hurried to the door. "Lord Beverley!" she called, and then she stopped.

"No! I daren't tell him while he's like that," she told herself. "Supposing—I were to try—to get Lambert—let out!—What's the good? It's too late now—the mischief's done—and to-morrow morning won't make it any worse. No! there he is and there he'll stay, till the doors open on Monday morning. But I can't let him lose his place—and if I told Beverley now—a bull of Bashan 'ld be a babe-in-arms to him." And then, with a sudden inspiration—"I know! I'll write to him—a letter he can get to-morrow morning—and I'll keep out of his way all day." She sat down at

the writing table. "That's it!" She took up a pen and began to write—

"Dear Lord Beverley: Poor as my opinion of Tom Lambert is—" (Looking up at clock) "Five and twenty past seven! Ten o'clock last night!" (counting on her fingers) "ten to ten's twelve and ten to half past seven's—another nine—twenty-one hours and a half—alone in the Chamber of Horrors!" And then, hardening her heart she added, "Well, serves him right!"

"Poor as my opinion of Tom Lambert is, I cannot allow you to think—" she wrote, and then she stopped. "Poor wretch! how hungry he must be!—and thirsty—And a good lesson for him! Let him dream of his Myrtle!"

She proceeded with her letter—

"To think that his absence is due to design on his part—I know where he is—" She stopped again and reaching for the tele-

phone book, opened it, and searched the pages for a moment.

"Tussaud—Madam and Sons Limited—56 Paddington," she said. "That's it!" And then she slammed the book shut. "No, I won't!" she exclaimed and wrote again—

"The fact is that he went to Madam Tussaud's last night (more fool he!) *and* (Poor Tom!—wonder if he's got any cigars with him!" she finished, questioning herself, and forgetting the letter entirely.)

Then, with a sudden inspiration, she seized the telephone instrument, and taking up the receiver, called:

"Hullo! are you there?—Yes—Trunk call, please. Get me 56 Paddington—5—6 yes, that's right! Sunday evening, you can put me through quickly? You can. Thanks."

Mrs. Beamish resumed her writing. "After all," she said to herself, "I don't see

why I need give myself away so much," and she ran her pen through the lines that she had written, and began afresh.

"I have reason to believe that he went with some of the others to Madame Tussaud's last night—and I think it quite possible that he may have stayed too late and got locked in. And after twenty-four solitary hours confinement in the Chamber of Horrors, I do think he's been punished sufficiently for his carelessness—and other things!" she added, for her benefit only.

The telephone bell rang insistently, and she answered at once.

"Hullo! What! Through already! Thanks! Hullo! Who's that? Are you Madame Tussaud's? Who's speaking? The night watchman? Oh! Have you got the keys—You have . . . I—er—I think that by some accident, a gentleman got locked in last night—when the place was

closed: into the Chamber of Horrors.—Yes!" She listened a moment to some message.

"Yes, do, please," she continued, after a pause, "and when you've got him—ask him to speak to Mrs. Beamish on the 'phone.—B—E—A—M—I—S—H! Thank you! I'll hold the line—No. Don't ring us off—another three minutes!"

"Yes—(Why do they man—or woman—telephone exchanges with congenital idiots!)"

She turned again to her letter.

"Think he's been punished sufficiently, and though of course he ought not to have got locked in—or—to have been there at all —I do hope you'll forgive him for my sake. Whatever am I writing!—for my sake indeed! For Myrtle Anson's! and it'd be no more than he deserves if I were to tell Beverley all about it—but I won't—I'll hold it over him!"

She was still holding the receiver to her ear, and in reply to the operator's customary question she said snappishly:

"Finished? Good heavens, no! I told you another three minutes—they're fetching somebody. No! I haven't finished—what? You cut me off if you dare! Sorry to keep you from your novel, but you'll have to finish the chapter when I'm done—and—eh? On again?" and then she recognized Lambert's voice.

"Ah, Lambert," she exclaimed, over the wire, "they've got you out, eh? Tired of being a wax work?"

But the trainer paid no attention to the jibing quality of her tones and plunged into a recital of what he had heard while he posed as Dr. Crippen.

"It's not true," she exclaimed over the wire. "You're inventing it to get at me! Tom Lambert, will you swear it is true?"

Lord Beverley entered during her con-

cluding words, and she explained rapidly to him.

"What cock and bull story's this?" he demanded.

But after another short talk with Lambert she continued to Beverley:

"It's true! He says he overheard a plot to kill the Whip. They mean to uncouple the horse-box at Menfield Junction just the other side of the tunnel and leave it where the down express'll run into it and smash the whole thing up."

Lord Beverley now talked with Lambert in his turn.

"If this story of yours is true, whose plot is it?" he asked. "What! Captain Sartoris! Greville! Are you mad or drunk, sir, to make such an accusation! You'll take your oath upon it? Going by the same train as the Whip—prevent the horse's starting at any cost. Yes, I'll do that."

He snapped up the receiver, when they

heard the whistle of the train as it left Falconhurst station.

"You can't. There goes the train," lamented Mrs. Beamish.

"Too late!" exclaimed Beverley. "I wouldn't have that horse hurt for three times what she stands to win. Good heavens, Betty. Harry Anson and the others—we must save them."

But Mrs. Beamish was already on her agitated but rapid way to the door.

"And we will," she cried. "It is my doing! My stupid jealousy has led to it all. It's my duty to put things straight, and I'm going to do it!"

"How?" demanded the Marquis.

"Give me the big motor and a couple of men," she said, "and I'll race the train and get to the tunnel first."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WRECK

THE station employés at Falconhurst station had rather hurriedly prepared the horse-box for the reception of Lord Beverley's pride, for they were anxious to see the car attached to the train which, having arrived ahead of its time, was being held, for they knew that once through the tunnel the down express would be only three minutes behind them. They had set the red tail-light and arranged the slip cord which would release the coupler when it was pulled, and now they were waiting for the Whip to be led aboard.

Lady Diana and Harry Anson were standing at the intelligent animal's head while the girl said her good-bys to the racer she

loved and upon whose successful performance at Newmarket depended so much.

"Good-by," she whispered to the horse softly, "you're to run your first great race. Win it. Win it! For you're carrying my heart!"

It seemed almost as though the Whip understood, for with her muzzle she caressed the hand of the girl.

Then Lady Diana turned to the jockey.

"Good-by, Harry," she said; "go and win—for the honor of the stable—for the honor of our colors—and—for me—God bless you both, and good luck!"

And then she stood aside. Rapidly Harry and the porters led the Whip into the car which had already been bedded down. Then while Harry waved his hand and Lady Diana and the others on the platform responded, the train, which had backed down, bore off the car and its own load of passengers.

Harry, who knew that the succeeding days would be of great activity, went to bed in his bunk in the compartment in one end of the little odd English horse-box, while the train attained a high rate of speed and entered Falconhurst tunnel.

He promised himself that he would keep one eye on the horse, even while the train was in motion and but little danger was to be apprehended from those to whose interest it might be to try and harm the Whip. But he soon dozed.

They were in the tunnel when Captain Sartoris opened a door of a carriage which he had quite to himself. He had joined the train further to the north of Falconhurst and none of the Falconhurst people had known that he was aboard.

Now in the blackness of the tunnel he crept along the footplate which ran just below the side doors and which in the past had given opportunity for many a crime.

While the passengers were absolutely unconscious of his lurching progress past them he crept along the train, clinging and swaying. In this fashion he passed by the door of a compartment in which the morose Verner Haslam was thinking of him at that very moment and lamenting to himself weakly that he had been drawn into a path whose issue he could not see.

Perhaps the presence of the man, who had become in a sense his master, was realized subconsciously by the clergyman, for at the moment that Sartoris passed by his compartment the shoulders of the substitute vicar were drawn up into a shrug and shudder. But to his conscious mind there came no warning.

Sartoris, while not a crack, was nevertheless something of an athlete, and the passage on the footplate gave him no particular concern, once he had accustomed himself to the swaying and the exact

counterpoise it was necessary to impart to his own body.

Now he stood at the very end of the foot-plate which was on the carriage next the horse-box. Soon he had passed to the end of the horse-box. Quickly he raised the tail-light and swung it in a circle for a few seconds.

He wished to hurl it in such a way that the flame would surely be extinguished, as he wanted no warning to be given to the train behind which was to complete his project.

He realized that if he merely dropped the lantern to the line, there was a bare possibility that it would continue to burn.

His semi-circular swings were justified a moment later, when he flung the lamp to the ground, for there was a sudden impact, and then no light showed.

With one foot resting upon the carriage and one upon the horse-box, he pulled the

slip cord and had the instant pleasure of seeing the horse-box and its freight drop behind.

The Whip would not run. The race would be lost. He would be saved from Kelly's clutches. Brancaster would be impoverished and the marriage of Lady Diana and Brancaster put far off.

Quietly he slipped along the footplate and regained his own carriage and compartment without his absence having been noted.

With a speed that gradually fell away the horse-box, with the Whip inside and Harry fast asleep, rumbled through the tunnel and came to a stop on the main line, directly in the path of the first train which should come along, near Menfield Junction.

The whistle and the sounds of the rapid approach through the tunnel of the down express came very plainly through the darkness, just as a motor containing two men and Mrs. Beamish dashed around a bend in the

road and came to a palpitating, panting stop near the horse-box, and at one side of the line.

Mrs. Beamish and her two escorts from the establishment below stairs at Falconhurst darted across the line and pounded upon the door of the horse-box as the train in the tunnel moved nearer and nearer.

Finally Harry put his head out of the window and the frenzied voice of Mrs. Beamish came to him:

"Quick, Harry, the down express's on you. You're cut off and the Whip and you'll be killed!" she shouted above the roar of the oncoming train.

Harry cast one glance behind him, saw the rushing express and then threw down the sidedoor of the horse-box.

The Whip was led across the line and to safety under the very glare of the headlight of the express. Not a second after this the engine of the onrushing train plowed into

the car just left by Harry and the Whip and was derailed, while the engine driver fell badly hurt to the ground.

The light impediment of the horse-box served to derail several of the carriages behind which had been traveling at high speed, and a number of passengers were hurled out, or thrown violently against partitions and other immovable objects within the train.

Amid escaping steam and a fire, which had started among the wreckage, the work of succor was begun.

Among those who labored none worked with greater courage than the Rev. Verner Haslam. His train had been stopped after the crash, and had backed down to render aid. It was he who crawled among the splintered, burning mass on the line to bring out many of the children who had been in the express.

CHAPTER XIX

AT NEWMARKET

ON the day after the wreck and the day before the great race the Whip made her triumphal entry into Newmarket. The march toward what all in the Beverley stables felt to be victory ended for the day when the racer was escorted by touts, racing men, tipsters and youngsters into the yard of the Rutland Arms Hotel, with several policemen to keep the crowd at a safe distance from the pride of Beverley.

Lady Diana and Mrs. Beamish had arrived at Newmarket in a motor-car and were already at the inn when the mare was led into the yard, accompanied by Lambert and Harry Anson, as well as a small army of attendants. As soon as the Whip

was halted inside the ivy-covered enclosure, Lady Diana could not resist welcoming the beautiful mare with an enthusiastic kiss on her soft nose.

"You darling!" the girl cried. "And looking more beautiful than ever—isn't she, Betty? I hope she's none the worse for her fright last night, Tom?"

"Lord! no, my Lady! Playful as a lamb she is, biting and lashing out at everybody as comes within a mile of her," answered Lambert, with pardonable pride.

Mrs. Beamish, too, patted the Whip's neck.

"Pretty dear! let's hope she'll give a good account of them as tried to do for her, when I come across 'em," Tom told her, and the honest fellow rested a loving hand on the mare's back.

"There—take her to her box, Tom," Lady Diana directed, "the old Beverley box that has seen so many a winner go forth

from it to carry the Beverley colors first past the post." Her eyes sparkled as she saw again the throngs of eager people madly cheering her grandfather's victories.

"And it'll see another to-morrow, my lady—for it's never sheltered a better horse than the Whip—no, not though the stable door's that thick with our plates as you can scarcely see the wood between 'em!" The trainer spoke with the assurance of one who knew. He had not spent almost thirty years with the Beverley horses without being confident by this time of his own judgment.

"But there's room for one more plate, Lambert," Mrs. Beamish said with noticeable cordiality, "and we'll nail it there to-morrow, won't we, Di?" she appealed.

"That we will!" Lady Diana rejoined. "Ever since the Fifth Harry gave it us, our crest has been 'The Whip,' our motto 'My

way for me!'—and to-morrow we'll take our way to triumph. Yes. 'The Whip's' the sign that England rules the sea, and 'The Whip' shall be the sign of victory for Beverley by land!"

There was a cheer from all the bystanders, as Lady Diana, making a sign to Harry Anson to follow with his charge, led the way to the paddock, leaving Mrs. Beamish and Lambert behind her, alone in the courtyard.

"And how may you be feeling, Mrs. B—mish?" Tom inquired, not quite certain of his reception.

Mrs. Beamish showed some signs of emotion.

"I'll not disguise from you, Lambert, that I'm not feeling quite myself," she answered.

"Ha! Feeling more like your old self and and less like your new—eh?—less like the Hon. Mrs. Beamish and more like Betty

Dawkins—eh?—more like the jackdaw and less like the peacock's feathers, eh?" Tom was resolved not to be too kind.

"Peacock's feathers, indeed!" she exclaimed indignantly.

"Yes . . . Gold 'andbags and watches and lace 'ankerchiefs, and such like." Here he burst into a loud guffaw. "Lor! that young woman she did take you on proper!" he jeered, recalling Mrs. Beamish's adventure in the Chamber of Horrors.

"Yes!—and you looked on and let her. Tom Lambert, I'll never forgive you!"

"Come, I like that! Who had me locked up in the Chamber of Horrors?" he retorted.

"It was your doing!" Mrs. Beamish told him, vindictively. "When a man associates with murderers, he must expect to be locked up. Why did you hide?"

Tom smiled broadly, knowing that he had the situation well in hand.

"Because you've got a suspicious mind," he explained.

"Because you've got a guilty one," she corrected.

Lambert saw that the lady was a bit more difficult than he had believed and he straightway lost his assurance.

"Stop that, Betty! It ain't a thing for joking," he said with feeling. And as the Whip's jockey reappeared in the courtyard Tom turned to him and called, "Harry, my lad, come here, and if you can, just you speak up what you've got to say."

Harry Anson approached Mrs. Beamish with his cap in his hand.

"I—I want to thank you, ma'am, for what you did last night—for saving my life," he said choking and embarrassed. "Yes, ma'am, it was so," he continued, as Mrs. Beamish started to protest. "If it hadn't been for you, my sister'd ha' been left alone in the world—along in her trouble."

"Trouble—?" Mrs. Beamish inquired, not understanding.

Harry's emotion almost got the better of him.

"Yes, ma'am, wrong there has been—and —shame—but it wasn't from him it come" —and the boy pointed to Lambert—"but from the same hand as tried to wreck the Whip last night."

"From Captain Sartoris!" Mrs. Beamish cried, a great light breaking over her at last.

"Yes, that's him! . . . Him as wanted me to pull that mare—him as would have ruined me—as he'd ruined her—my sister!" The poor boy nearly broke down as he told his great trouble.

The good woman put her hand tenderly on Harry's shoulder, and in a most motherly way she comforted him as best she could.

"My boy, my boy—" she said, "I'm sorry, very sorry—if there is anything I can do—

if—presently—Myrtle can have a new start in a new land—"

"Oh, ma'am!—if it only could be!" the lad cried impetuously, hope springing anew within him.

"It shall be," she assured him. "I know I can promise as much as that for Lord Beverley."

"Thank you, ma'am, from my heart and hers." And Harry's eyes filled in his complete thankfulness.

"There, there, that'll do, my lad! You go and look after your 'oss," Lambert said, with clumsy kindness.

As Harry hurried away the trainer turned his shining face to Mrs. Beamish.

"And now, Betty—what have you got to say?" he asked.

"Sorry, Tom, with all my heart. I take it back."

"Now you see what comes along o' suspicion and jealousy," he chided her.

"Well, you needn't triumph over me," she protested.

"I'm not a-triumphing over you, Betty—only a-telling of you for your good, that there train accident all lies at your door!"

"My door!"

"And the door of the Chamber of Horrors, what you left locked on me for four-and-twenty hours. If you had not been jealous and followed me to Tussaud's—"

"You wouldn't have hidden among the murderers and we should never have known of the plot at all," she interrupted.

"Well, I never!" Lambert was surprised into exclaiming. Mrs. Beamish's nimble wits were too much for him.

"No, you never—would!" she hastened to follow up her advantage. "And the Whip with Harry and the lad—would have been smashed up, as well as the others."

"Trust a woman to turn a story round her

own way—and—" Tom fumed and sputtered.

"Look!" she suddenly said, pointing to the patch of street visible through the entrance.

"Captain Sartoris!" Lambert exclaimed.

"Yes. Now if you want someone to talk to—and tell off—talk to him!—and when you've done that, you can come and talk to me—you'll find me," she ordered, conscious of her woman's mastery.

"Where?" asked Tom.

"Where you ought to be—and never are —with your horse!" And there was a wicked gleam of triumph in Mrs. Beamish's eye.

CHAPTER XX

MRS. D'AQUILA'S INSPIRATION

"AH, Lambert, the Whip arrived?" Sartoris's manner was assured and easy.

Lambert looked him directly in the eye.

"Yes, she has," he sputtered, "and she's going to arrive to-morrow, too, you infernal scoundrel! Don't talk to me—don't you dare to show your ugly nose near my horse —or I'll pull it for you."

The Captain's smile was contemptuous.

"My good idiot—you are very drunk," he said.

"No, I'm not," disclaimed the trainer.

"Then what the deuce do you mean by—"

"I mean," said Lambert, sternly, "that I was at Madame 'Toosoo's' on Saturday night, Captain Sartoris, close to your el-

bow, at your back, and I heard every blooming word you said."

Mrs. D'Aquila had followed Sartoris into the yard and she heard Lambert's last words.

"Dear me, who is this creature?" she drawled, surveying the horseman through her glasses.

"You'll jolly soon know to-morrow," the outraged and angry trainer said, "when you're both in the dock, madam, and you hear what I've sworn—that you wanted it so badly—that you had the pluck—but there wasn't an accident—"

And Lambert, who knew that if he remained longer in the yard he couldn't keep from thrashing Sartoris, left abruptly.

The Captain was slightly taken aback.

"Did you hear that?" he asked the woman. "Your own words. The beast must have been there really—hidden—we never saw him and he heard everything."

"What does it matter?" returned the steadier nerved woman. "He's no witness. And it's one oath against two. I shall swear that I was never there in my life."

"Is it worth the trouble?"

"My dear Greville—"

"You've forgotten the accident."

"I've not. I always thought it possible," she said.

"I didn't," he returned sharply. "I thought that when the horse-box stopped on the line, the lad, the trainer, whoever it was—could get out—go for help—at any rate jump out when they heard the next train coming. I never thought of a dozen poor devils—torn and cut and thrown about—smashed!"

"All third-class passengers," the woman answered with a shrug. "Dreadful things are always happening to people of that sort."

"Quite so," returned Sartoris, "but you mustn't kill 'em for all that. I only thought I was going to do for the horse. What's the punishment for manslaughter?"

Mrs. D'Aquila laughed outright.

"Fiddlesticks," she commented. "They can't prove anything. Where's your motive?"

"I'll tell you," he said. "The truth will come out if any of these people die. It was my work. I tried to kill my cousin's horse. Kelly, the bookmaker, has laid thousands against it. In Kelly's pocket is a bill of mine—with Di's name upon it. She did not put it there. If the Whip does not win that bill comes back to me. There's my motive. If the Whip wins he'll give the bill to Di."

For the moment she abandoned her defense of him to him.

"And if you have any sense," she said,

"you'll be in Paris to-night—clear away by to-morrow—"

"That won't prevent the horse from winning," he said, "won't stop Kelly. The minute Beverley sees that bill the chain's complete. I shall stand proved a criminal—a train wrecker—nearly a murderer. I shan't hesitate."

"Don't be absurd," she advised.

"I'm not," he answered sullenly. "Do you think I'd pass the rest of my life broke? Begging—hunted—no, thanks. I've had my time—not half a bad time. It must end some day, and I shan't hesitate."

Sartoris had drawn a revolver and was looking at it.

"What's that?" she asked.

"That," he smiled bitterly. "That's Harry Anson's revolver. He left it in my rooms. Poetic justice if I used it. I'm afraid, Nora, the chain's too strong. There's no way out."

She looked at the weapon in his hand and then at him quickly.

"Yes, there is," she exclaimed suddenly, "and almost a certainty. That thing made me think of it. You told me Harry Anson came to your chambers and threatened you. If I were you I should go in fear of my life."

"I!"

"And I should swear it—forcibly," she went on, "before the nearest magistrate in London, and come down to-morrow with detectives and arrest him on the course, just before the race."

"They'd get another jockey."

"To ride the Whip? You know that's impossible!"

Sartoris took a deep breath of relief.

"That's true!" he exclaimed.

"Very well," she said enthusiastically. "No race is over until it's lost. Here is your chance. Almost a certainty. Take it and win!"

"By Heaven, I will," he said fervently.

"Then put that thing away," she said, indicating the revolver. "Don't lose a minute! I'll walk with you to the station. Go up to town at once and do your work. We'll see Brancaster broken and beaten yet."

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRUTH AT LAST

As Sartoris and Mrs. D'Aquila strolled off together toward the station, Mrs. Beamish and Tom Lambert watched them from the yard of the inn, which they had entered soon after the others left it.

"There they go. A pretty pair of beauties. They ought to marry each other," said poor Tom, who had marrying on the brain whenever he found himself alone with his Betty.

"If you'd seen them stand there, as bold as brass," he went on, "and swear me out—as if I'd dreamed everything I heard them say."

"Quite sure you didn't, Tom?" she asked tartly.

"Just as sure as I am that I didn't dream

that I saw that young woman filch from you everything you had with you," he said.

Then his mind wandered into another channel as he thought of a day years ago.

"Remember, Betty," he said, "what a day we had haymaking in Farmer Marsh's meadow? You wore a little lilac sunbonnet and looked a daisy, and no sweeter daisy doesn't blow—"

"Oh, Tom," she said, trying to stop him.

"Remember, Betty," he continued, "after supper you and me went for a walk along Miller's lane. Wasn't the honeysuckle sweet, Betty?"

Old memories were stirring in her, too.

"It was, Tom," she said. "Ah! there's no place like a hedge for honeysuckle."

"Remember, Betty, you wanted a bunch and I climbed up to get it for you?"

She sighed.

"And tore your hands with a great bram-

ble—your little hand—and I tied it up for you with my handkerchief."

"And while you were doing it I—"

He finished his sentence with an expressive pantomime of kissing.

"Don't, Tom," she begged, as old memories seemed about to make her give to Tom his long deferred "Yes."

"I can't help it, Betty," he said.

Now once more Betty called upon the volume which had prevented her many times from forgetting that she belonged—by marriage—to the almost princely house of Beverley, and so could not marry one beneath her in station.

"Save me, Burke," she said. "Beverley, Geoffrey, Vandeleur, Delacroix, George, Jocelyn,' "— She was repeating the titles and names of the Marquis of Beverley as they appeared in "Burke's Peerage," that she might conquer her passion for Tom Lambert.

"I'm going," she lamented, and then continued to quote: "'Tenth Marquis of—K. G., K. C. B.; K. C., S. I.—'"

But Lambert overcame the last obstacle in his path of love, seized her, drew her to him, and kissed her, just as he should have done long ago. And to his wonder she returned his caress.

"Oh! Tom—I mean Mr. Lambert—what have you done?" she cried.

Then both of them became aware of the presence in the yard of Lady Diana. The girl was laughing at them.

"I've compromised you in public and now you'll have to marry me," said Lambert with a laugh.

"Do you know, Betty, I really think you will," put in Lady Diana as Lambert and Mrs. Beamish retreated into another corner of the yard.

But Lady Diana had scant time to give

to their affairs, for a moment later Lord Brancaster appeared.

He had received a letter from the girl telling him how the Rev. Verner Haslam had been taken to Falconhurst after the wreck, and how unnerved he had seemed. He had really appeared on the point of telling something to Lady Diana, but the next morning had left Falconhurst without a word.

Lady Diana had added in the letter that Lord Beverley had applied for warrants for Sartoris and Mrs. D'Aquila on the strength of an affidavit made by Tom Lambert.

Brancaster had rushed to Newmarket the moment he received the letter.

The young people were commiserating with each other on the flight of Haslam, when that individual entered the stable yard. He was pale and agitated and even trembling as he approached.

"Ah, Mr. Haslam," said Lady Diana, "I was just talking of you. Why did you run away from us so suddenly at Falconhurst?"

"I was afraid—" began Haslam, and then stopped.

"Of what?" she asked gently.

"What I had done," he said.

"You should have been proud. It was splendid work. You saved all those children. You crawled into the wreckage when others feared to do so."

"And can't save myself—my soul—my life," he said in a seeming agony.

"Come—come—where is the danger?" asked the young girl.

A terror almost such as might come to one demented—at imaginary perils—crossed the pallid face of the man in clerical garb.

"Sartoris—Greville Sartoris," he said, "the devil—loose—at my throat next—save me—"

"Mr. Haslam, you are in no danger here," Brancaster said, reassuringly.

"Why not? Does he stop at anything?" went on the frightened clergyman.

"What do you mean?" demanded the young Earl, now determined that the scene should end or that the cleric should explain himself.

"That I am a coward," said Haslam. "Fear sealed my lips. Fear opens them."

There was a murmur of astonishment from Brancaster and Lady Diana, and then the pale clergyman hurried on:

"That was his work—wasn't it? You told me—the accident?"

Tom Lambert had left Betty's side and was now openly listening to Haslam.

"I know it was his work, sir," interrupted Lambert. "I heard it planned between him and Mrs. D'Aquila."

The vicar was looking straight before

him. In the vacancy he seemed to see horrible sights, hear terrifying sounds.

"Murder!" he muttered. "A dozen lives —a hundred—what did he care? He would have taken them to gain his end. Would he stop at mine?"

"Why should he want—?" Brancaster began.

"My silence forever! The silence of the grave," said the clergyman almost beside himself in his cowardly passion. "Because I helped his villainy—he drove me to it by fear. Then held me dumb—by fear. Now I have seen his work, his plan—complete—reckless—remorseless—the crash—the torn bodies on the line—I've seen the fire—heard the children scream—what is my life to him? Save me! Save me, if you will. Put prison walls between us. There I can atone—repent."

"Of what?" asked the young Earl, going

closer to Haslam and looking at him peculiarly.

Haslam raised his head, looked directly at the questioner, and then at Lady Diana.

"The lie that wrecked your lives," he said.

After a pause he went on:

"There was a marriage. That is true."

"Between me and Mrs. D'Aquila?" demanded Brancaster.

"Between the woman—and one who took your place," confessed the weakling.

"Who was it?" came from Brancaster.

"Sartoris," said Haslam.

"I did the rest," he added in a trembling, low voice, "wrote it in the book—lies! Swore to it, after—lies! Fear drove me as it drives me now! Rank fear, fear for my body—greater for my soul—pity—I confess—forgive and save me."

"Mr. Haslam," said the generous hearted

Lady Diana, "you shall be safe with us. Stay with us until the truth is clear and proved."

And in his agony of soul, the Rev. Verner Haslam joined the hands of Lady Diana and Brancaster, and held them both in his.

"HE JOINED THEIR HANDS AND HELD THEM BOTH IN HIS"

CHAPTER XXII

THE WHIP WINS

IT was only a few moments before the great Two Thousand Guinea Race.

In the paddock the friends of Falconhurst were listening to the self-congratulations of Lord Beverley that in spite of all that had been done to prevent the Whip's starting, everything was now in readiness.

Harry Anson had been weighed in and the Whip herself was pawing the turf waiting for the race to be called and for Harry to spring into the saddle.

In anticipation of the effect the confession of Haslam would have upon the Marquis of Beverley, Lady Diana and the Earl of Brancaster were openly strolling together about the paddock, confident and hopeful

too that the big race would give Brancaster a war fund against his enemies.

In the press in the paddock Captain Sartoris, followed at a little distance by two alert-featured but unfashionably garbed men, met Mrs. D'Aquila.

Their greetings were cordial and happy.

"It's all right," Sartoris told the woman, joyously. "You're a clever woman, Nora. The magistrate was a dear old person—most obliging—issued a warrant at once—said he would lock him up, too, if he could not find good bail—of course he will, and then release him to-morrow."

"I don't particularly care if they bail him to-morrow, as long as you take him to-day," she said.

"That's sure enough," answered the Captain confidently. "The detective-inspector and another chap came down with me. Luckily they don't know Anson by sight, so

I have come to look for him, and I shall find him at exactly the right moment."

Kelly, the "King of the Ring," came up to Sartoris at this moment and with him stepped aside.

"Anything to tell me?" he asked in a low tone.

"Only that you can give me the bill if you like," the other responded.

Kelly appeared pleased.

"You've done your best to earn it," he said, "but the job isn't finished, you know."

"It will be very soon," put in the Captain quickly. "I told you what I meant to do—the men are here."

"Then hurry up, my lad," the bookmaker told him. "They will be mounted in a minute. Time's short and remember, if the Whip loses, the bill and the money's yours, but if the Whip wins it goes to Lady Di. You know what's at stake on the race."

The loud call of the clerk of the course for the entrants to take their places sounded throughout the paddock.

Harry Anson and Tom Lambert appeared leading the Whip.

"We've just saddled, my Lady," Lambert said to Lord Beverley's granddaughter. "There goes the bell! Anything to tell Harry?"

Lady Diana caressed the Whip while she answered:

"Only this—everything that wickedness could do has been done to stop our horse, but she is safe. Now, for the honor of the colors, go and ride your best."

With his hand on the jockey's shoulder, the young Earl added to the spurring speech of Lady Diana:

"For you're carrying hearts and hopes today as well as fortunes. All England will cheer you when you win, Harry, and I shall

be the first to shake you by the hand. In a few minutes it will all be over."

"Yes, my lord, all over and—" began Harry.

But Sartoris had pointed to the jockey and the two sharp-faced men had left the Captain and were now at Harry's side.

"Is your name Harry Anson?" demanded the first of these.

"Yes," said the jockey, one foot in the stirrup.

The man held out to him a revolver.

"Is that your revolver? Your name's scratched on it," he said.

"My revolver? Yes," said Anson, wonderingly.

"Found in the rooms of Captain Sartoris —"

"I—" Harry paused, while the detective said briskly—

"I'm sorry, but I must arrest you on a

charge of having threatened the life of Captain Sartoris at his chambers in the Albany on Saturday night. Whatever you say may be used against you."

"And I'll answer the charge," retorted Harry. "Let the whole world know the truth, after the race."

"No, you must come now," said the detective.

"Before the race?" asked the agonized Harry.

"At once," he was told.

Lord Brancaster moved closely up to the two detectives.

"I am Lord Brancaster," he said. "I will go bail for anything you like—only let the lad ride. Hang it, officers, you are Englishmen! You are sportsmen! Give us fair play! I'll stake my honor the lad's innocent. I'll stake my honor he shall answer to the charge. You don't know what this race means to all of us. Let him ride."

"I'm very sorry, my lord," the detective answered. "Give you my word, my lord, I'd like to, but I can't. We must do our duty."

And over the protests of Brancaster, Lord Beverley and Lord Clanmore of the Jockey Club, the detectives put heavy hands upon the shoulders of Anson.

Clanmore, who had an official position at the track in addition to being a steward, tried to step into the breach.

"But, hang it, Beverley," he said, "we won't stand by and see it done. I'm here—Denham's here—we're stewards, and if there is another lad about who can ride the weight give him the colors. We will waive the weighing out. He shall mount at once."

The parties to the controversy were now surrounded by an eager, excited crowd, many of whose members had bet heavily on the Whip and were interested for that and

other reasons of pure sportsmanship to see the pride of the Beverley stables start.

Lady Diana pressed herself forward.

"Anyone we name, Lord Clanmore?" she asked.

"Anyone, Lady Di," he responded, gallantly. "Rules be hanged at a time like this! The Jockey Club does what it likes."

At this staunch speech the crowd cheered.

"Very well, then," said Lady Diana, her little fists clenched. "Please remember only two people can manage our horse. With a strange lad she's no use. You want to see fair play—to see the public, who have backed us, have an honest run for their money. There's only one way. You promise whoever I name you'll let ride?"

"Yes," returned Clanmore and Denham, the two stewards.

"I name—myself," she exclaimed.

Denham and Clanmore both protested

that it was impossible, that it was unsafe, that it had never been done.

"A girl has never ridden a race," ended Clanmore.

"Then let her now," the girl persisted.

In their chivalric mood Clanmore and Denham might have consented to anything, but Kelly put a stop to this emotional turn of affairs and recalled to both Brancaster and Lady Diana the solid basis on which they had hoped to set their fortunes.

"And if she does ride," he shouted, "the ring won't pay. It isn't racing."

For a moment it seemed as though this ultimatum of the ring had indeed ended the whole matter, but Brancaster turned to the crowd of racing enthusiasts.

"Then I will tell you what is racing," he shouted in his turn. "You, all of you who have backed the horse—I will tell you what is racing—what is honesty—what is sport,

fair play. Will you stand by and see yourselves robbed?"

The crowd was catching fire at his invective. There were cries of "No, no, no!"

"I have given my honor," he went on still in his strong voice, "that the police shall take the lad the minute he's past the post, but they say 'No.' What do you say? There's your jockey and there's your horse. Let the lad go. Will you lose your money, or will you follow me?"

And the young Earl hurled himself upon the nearer of the two detectives. He had nearly freed Anson when the mob realized what he was doing. In an instant they were about the two detectives. Despite the assistance of Kelly given to the representatives of the law, they were hustled from the paddock, while the jockey was fairly hurled upon the Whip.

The moment he felt the nervous horse-

flesh between his knees he was off upon the course almost automatically.

At a signal from Lord Clanmore, who realized the necessity of haste, the starting signal was given and they were off.

Now it seemed as though the events of the few minutes preceding the actual race had done their work with Anson. He was alive to his fingertips and never did his work better. The Whip, too, had profited by the long delay. Her nerves had been stretched to the breaking point, and she found the greatest relief in furious action just as her rider did.

It was with difficulty that Harry prevented his mount from taking the lead at the first moment the race began, but when they were in sight of the post he had passed all save the leader. Then, without using spur or whip, he simply shook out his reins.

In her wonderful stride the Whip passed

the leader and, half a length ahead of her, reached the post.

Into the paddock rode Anson, the victor, on the Whip. The jockey's face was white, and he was trembling violently. The race had told far more on him than on the splendid Whip, whose respiration was still even and regular, though, of course, considerably quickened.

The center of a cheering knot, Lady Diana and Brancaster pressed toward the mare, their arms around each other and their dignity as peer and marquis's heir completely gone for the moment. Somehow the story of their romance and of what they had at stake on the race had got about, and their sympathetic friends were ready to weep or laugh with them—or do both in turn.

The two detectives met Lord Beverley near the Whip. The one in authority had an open telegram in his hand. His whole

demeanor showed that there was now no intention upon his part of arresting the jockey.

"My lord," he said very humbly to Beverley, "we've just had a wire from Scotland Yard. The warrant on your application has been issued."

Beverley turned sternly upon his cousin, Captain Sartoris, and Mrs. D'Aquila where they stood in a corner of the paddock.

"Then don't let them slip away," he said. "Arrest them at once."

The detectives seized Sartoris and Mrs. D'Aquila and moved out of the paddock.

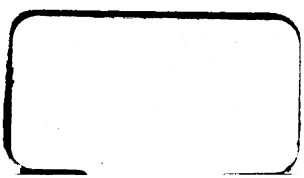
Then unmindful of all the crowd, Brancaster again put his arms about Lady Diana.

"Now what's this?" demanded the Marquis of Beverley.

Lady Diana raised her blue eyes to her grandfather.

"Well, I'll tell you all about it," she said, beginning a quick recital. "Once there was

a fine young man who was foolishly called by his people, who didn't know him, the Wicked Earl, but—"

THE END

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